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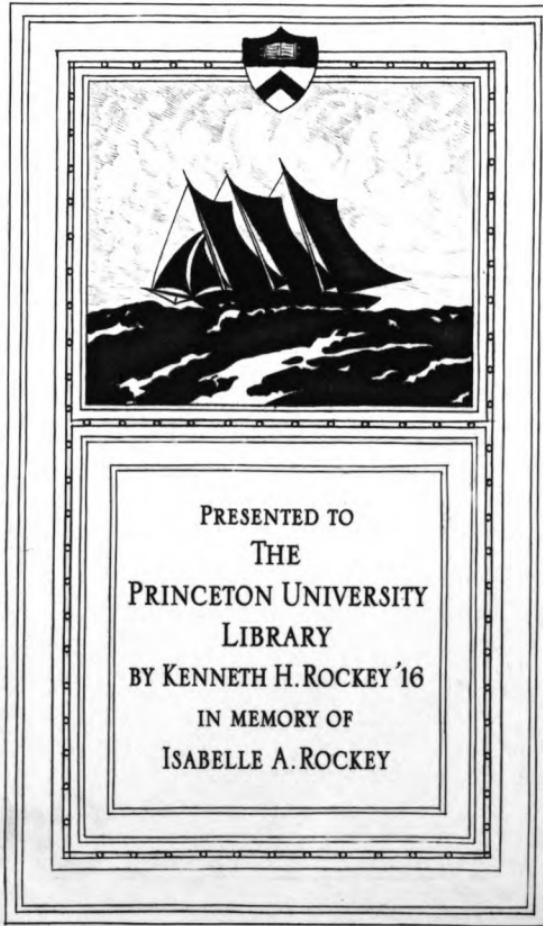


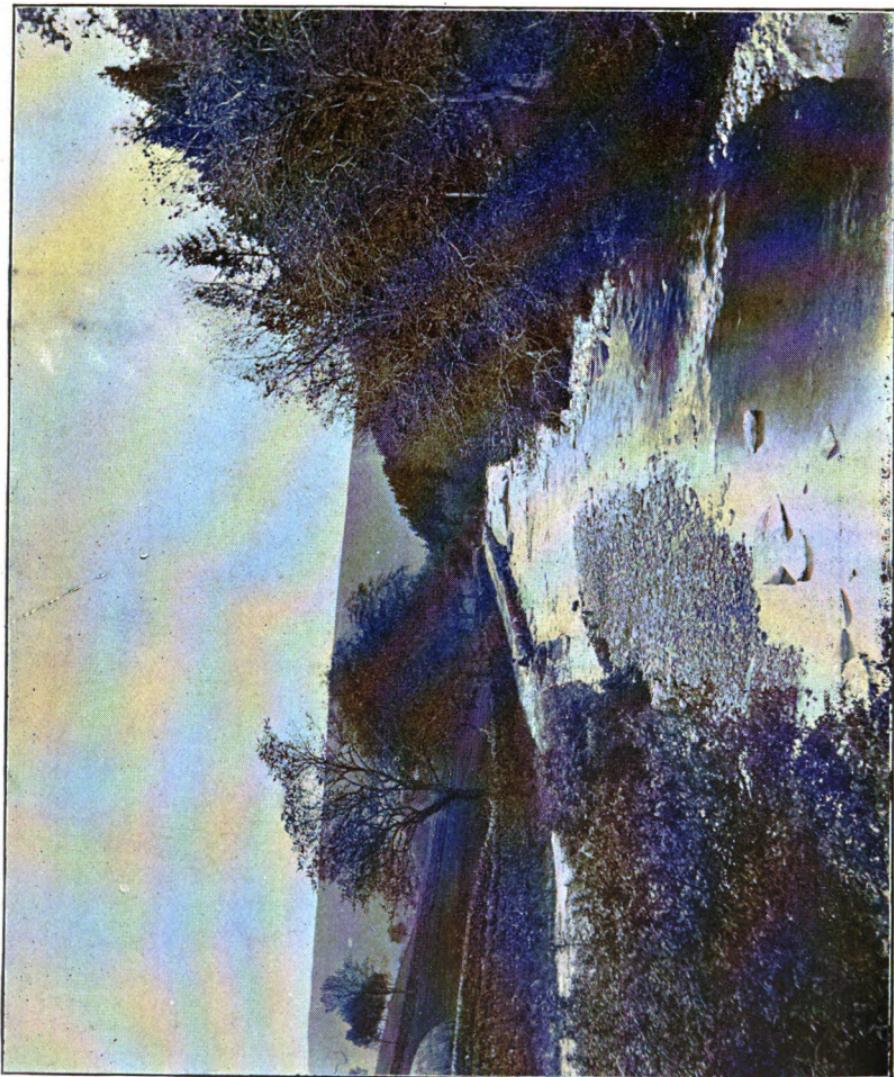
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INGLING DAYS



Jonathan Dale





IN THE DALE COUNTRY.

ANGLING DAYS

AN ANGLER'S BOOKS.

BY

JONATHAN DALE

(L. E. PAGE)

AUTHOR OF "THE KEYNOTE OF LIFE," "THE ENDLESS SPLENDOR,"
ETC.

"But most his measured words of praise
Caressed the angler's easy ways,
His idle meditative days,
His rustic diet."

CHEAPER EDITION.

LONDON :
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.
1898.

ANGLING DAYS

AND

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P R E F A C E.

THESE sketches, which originally appeared in *The Angler*, were reprinted in the hope that they might prove interesting to other brethren of the craft. They are now reissued in a cheaper and more accessible shape in the belief that a wider circle of readers will be reached. The writer is by no means accomplished in the gentle art, but has derived immense benefit, like many others, in the intervals of a busy life, as well as in seasons of physical weakness, from this innocent and restful pursuit. To keep life wholesome, every man should have a hobby ; and what Walton called "the contemplative man's recreation" is also an excellent relief to busy, overtaxed men.

Lovers of reading will not complain of the extracts from the writer's favourite books. The illustrations are from photos taken by Mr. T. Bramwell, Alston, Cumberland.

I. E. PAGE.

HEXHAM, April 20th, 1898.

(RECAP)
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THE FATHER OF FISHERMEN, AND HIS "COMPLETE ANGLER."

9

IT is always easy to talk of an old friend, and in this opening chapter mine is the pleasure of writing about a book which has been to me for nearly forty years a friend indeed. There are some books, which, once read, are cast aside forthwith; there are others which read once, are read for a lifetime. Walton's "Angler" is one of these. The lad who comes under its spell in early days, when the fishing zest is fresh upon him, and has sufficient love of reading to enjoy a book, will turn to it in middle age, and, later, will find solace in its pages as they are read in the evening of life. We have several editions to speak of before we have done, but the inscription inside our much used and long prized copy shows the date 1854—the book the gift of an elder brother. It formed originally a volume of the National Illustrated Library, published by Ingram, Cook, and Co., and capitally edited by "Ephemera," "the piscatory preacher of *Bell's Life*, who has written a 'Handbook of Angling,' and, 'The Book of the Salmon,' and more besides." The notes by Sir John Hawkins are added, and there are abundant clear instructions from the editor's pen.

This was "No. 10," then, in a young lad's library; it is now well worn with use; it was lost once for two years (left in a farm-house) and recovered; and it is

not done with yet. Charming old Walton, how often have we walked through the meadows and by the clear streams listening to the talk of *Piscator*, *Venator*, *Coridon*, and our Brother *Peter*!

We heard, as we prepared this chapter, that Messrs. Routledge and Sons had issued an excellent edition of the book, and have received from them a copy, strongly bound, for two shillings, of the identical edition which we have been describing. For careful editing, and notes bringing the book up to date, there can be nothing better; and we say to our readers one and all—get the book. Try teetotal for a few weeks if money is scarce, or even do without “baccy” for a while, so you possess yourself of good old Izaak’s masterpiece. For those who want a copy of the original, just as Walton wrote it, without “notes” or even Cotton’s “Second Part,” Messrs. Cassell have published in their National Library a neat edition, which may be had, well bound, for sixpence—a marvel of cheapness! This is just the book to place beside the pocket book in one’s fishing basket, and read under a hedge when a heavy shower drives us to the nearest shelter.

It may be well, for the sake of our younger readers, to give a few facts about the life of the father of anglers. Izaak Walton was born at Stafford, in August, 1593. At thirty years of age we hear of him as keeping a shop in London. At forty years of age he married the sister of Bishop Ken. He gave up business at fifty, and lived a quiet happy life till he was over

ninety, retaining his faculties and his love of books and fishing to the last. He wrote the lives of Dr. Donne, Mr. George Herbert, Mr. Richard Hooker, and others; but his "Complete Angler" gave him immortality. The book came out in 1653, and ran through four editions in twenty-three years. It has never lost its popularity since. The second part of the book—on fly fishing—written by Charles Cotton, was revised by Walton when he was eighty-two years old, and since then the book has never ceased to be read. Here is the record as to Walton's end and burial. As Wood says, "he ended his days on the fifteenth day of December, 1683, in the great frost at Winchester, in the house of Dr. William Hawkins. He was buried in the Cathedral, and in a chapel in the fourth aisle, called Prior Silksteed's Chapel; on a large black flat marble stone is this inscription to his memory, the poetry whereof has very little to recommend it."

HERE RESTETH THE BODY
OF
MR. ISAAC WALTON,
WHO DIED THE 15TH OF DECEMBER, 1683.

Alas ! he's gone before,
Gone to return no more ;
Our panting breasts aspire
After their aged sire,
Whose well-spent life did last
Full ninety years and past.
But now he hath begun
That which will ne'er be done,
Crown'd with eternal bliss,
We wish our souls with his,
Votis modestis sic flerunt liberi.

It would not be right to withhold a copy of the original title of this wonderful book. Here it is:—

THE COMPLEAT ANGLER,
OR THE
CONTEMPLATIVE MAN'S RECREATION.
BEING A DISCOURSE OF
FISH AND FISHING,
NOT UNWORTHY THE PERUSAL OF MOST ANGLERS.

Simon Peter said, I go a-fishing: and they said, We also go with thee.—John xxi., 3.

LONDON :

Printed by T. Maxey, for *Rich. Marriot*, in S. Dunstan's Churchyard, Fleet Street, 1653.

From a long experience of anglers, we know that very many know nothing of Walton's book, and hence it will best serve the purpose of our readers to give an idea of its contents, with some illustrations. Three men casually meet on a road—an angler, a hunter, and a falconer (whose sport is hawking). They fall into discourse, and each commends his own sport as the best. However, Piscator converts Venator, the hunter, to his way of thinking, and as scholar and master they join in various fishing expeditions. During the first day or two they simply converse, but soon are deep in the mysteries of chub and trout fishing—talking and angling together, the scholar getting his instructions as they walk through the meadows, or eat their lunch under the sheltering trees. Bits of pleasant dialogue by the water-side and while the fishing goes on, charm us, as this:—

Venator : " O my good master ! this morning walk has been spent to my great pleasure and wonder ; but, I pray, when shall I have your direction how to make artificial flies, like to those that the trout loves best, and also how to use them ? "

Piscator : " My honest scholar, it is now past five of the clock ; we will fish till nine, and then go to breakfast. Go you to yon sycamore tree, and hide your bottle of drink under the hollow root of it ; for about that time, and in that place, we will make a brave breakfast with a piece of powdered beef, and a radish or two that I have in my fish-bag ; we shall, I warrant you, make a good, honest, wholesome, hungry breakfast, and I will then give you direction for the making and using of your flies : and, in the meantime, there is your rod and line, and my advice is, that you fish as you see me do, and let's try which can catch the first fish."

Venator : " I thank you, master, I will observe and practise your direction as far as I am able."

Piscator : " Look you, scholar ; you see I have hold of a good fish : I now see it is a trout, I pray put that net under him, and touch not my line, for if you do, then we break all. Well done scholar, I thank you. Now, for another. Trust me, I have another bite : come, scholar, come, lay down your rod, and help me to land this, as you did the other. So now we shall be sure to have a good dish for supper."

Venator : I am glad of that ; but I have no fortune : sure, master, yours is a better rod and better tackling."

Piscator : " Nay, then, take mine : and I will fish with yours. Look you, scholar, I have another. Come, and do as you did before. And now I have a bite at another. Oh me ! he has broke all ; there's half-a-line and a good hook lost."

Venator : " Ay, and a good trout, too."

Piscator : " Nay, the trout is not lost ; for, pray take notice, no man can lose what he never had."

Venator : " Master, I can neither catch with the first nor second angle ; I have no fortune."

And so the pleasant talk proceeds like a melodious stream, with an anecdote here and there, a mildmaid's song, a jovial supper, and sound sleep at the country inn between " fresh sheets that smell of lavender." Who that reads this does not say, " I only wish I had been with them ! "

In the middle of chapter five the fourth day begins,

and reaches on to the sixteenth chapter. A long day's sport! But the chapters are full of talk about worms and caterpillars, poetry and good men, a good story about a gang of gipsies, the natural history of the salmon, queer things about pike and pike fishing, with pleasant innocent songs sung before bed-time. The book is full of poetry. Here are three verses from

THE ANGLER'S SONG.

I care not, I, to fish in seas—
 Fresh rivers best my mind do please,
 Whose sweet calm course I contemplate,
 And seek in life to imitate :
 In civil bounds I fain would keep,
 And for my past offences weep.

And when the timorous trout I wait
 To take, and he devours my bait,
 How poor a thing, sometimes I find,
 Will captivate a greedy mind ;
 And when none bite I praise the wise
 Whom vain allurements ne'er surprise.

As well content no prize to take,
 As use of taken prize to make,
 For so Our Lord was pleased, when
 He fishers made fishers of men ;
 Where (which is in no other game)
 A man may fish and praise His name.

It were easy to make our readers smile by quoting old-world blunders concerning natural history, as the “river in Arabia, of which all the sheep that drink thereof have their wool turned into a vermillion colour ;” or that other “river in Judea, of which Josephus, that learned Jew, tells that it runs swiftly all the six days of the week, and stands still and rests all their Sabbath.” Then, as to the tench, “the

physician of fishes," as Walton calls him : " Rondeletius says, that his being at Rome, he saw a great cure done by applying a tench to the feet of a very sick man. This, he says, was done after an unusual manner, by certain Jews." Our much-believing author says that the Jews have many secrets yet unknown to Christians, "since the days of their Solomon, who knew the nature of all things, even from the cedar to the shrub." Or, again, take this choice bit about the propagation of eels :—"Others say that eels growing old, breed other eels out of the corruption of their old age, which, Sir Francis Bacon says, exceeds not ten years. And others say that as worms are made of glutinous dewdrops, which are condensed by the sun's heat in those countries, so eels are bred of a particular dew—." But really, we must suddenly stop, or what will the modern angler, enlightened and scientific, think of Old Izaak ?

" Walton's Angler " is a religious book, and the religion is so pure, genial, and wholesome, that no one can object to it. It was said a while ago by some one who mixed a good deal with working men, that what they object to is not Christianity, but the lives of many Christians. Izaak Walton gives us the genuine thing, and his piety is mixed up with all he says and does. What, for example, could be better than the following ?

" Let not the blessings we receive daily from God make us not to value or not to praise Him because they be common ; let us not forget to praise Him for the innocent mirth and pleasure we have met with since we met together. What would a blind man

give to see the pleasant rivers and meadows and flowers and fountains that we have met with since we met together? I have been told that if a man that was born blind could obtain to have his sight for but only one hour during his whole life and should, at the first opening of his eyes, fix his sight upon the sun when it was in its full glory, either at the rising or setting of it, he would be so transported at it, and amazed, and so admire the glory of it, that he would not willingly turn his eyes from that first ravishing object, to behold all the other various beauties this world could present to him. And this, and many other like blessings, we enjoy daily. And for most of them, because they be so common, most men forget to pay their praises; but let not us, because it is a sacrifice so pleasing to Him that made that sun and us, and still protects us, and gives us flowers and showers, and stomachs and meat, and content and leisure to go a-fishing."

It would serve no good end to give in these pages any of Walton's instructions concerning fishing. Anglers do not go to books to learn, but find out for themselves, how to catch fish. Besides, for a shilling, any man may get a manual, such as Robert Blakey's "Angling, or How to Angle, and Where to Go." We are, therefore, noting the points which give the book its wonderful charm, and make it a cheerful companion in winter days, when rod and basket are lying unused on the upper shelf. Izaak Walton might have been sitting for his portrait when he thus described one of his friends:—

"I say this good old man was a dear lover and constant practiser of angling as any age can produce; and his custom was to spend, besides his fixed hours of prayer (those hours which, by command of the Church, were enjoined the clergy, and voluntarily dedicated to devotion by many primitive Christians); I say, beside these hours, this good man was observed to spend a tenth of his time in angling; and also, for I have conversed with him, to bestow a tenth part of his revenue, and usually all his fish, amongst the poor that inhabited near to those rivers in which it was caught, saying often 'that charity gave life to religion'; and at his return to

his house, would praise God he had spent that day free from worldly trouble, both harmlessly and in a way that became a Churchman. And this good man was well content, if not desirous, that posterity should know he was an angler, as may appear by his picture, now to be seen, and carefully kept, in Brasenose College, to which he was a liberal benefactor. In which picture he was drawn, leaning on a desk, with his Bible before him, and on one hand of him his lines, hooks, and other tackling lying in a round : and on his other hand are his angle rods of several sorts, and by them this is written : 'That he died 13th February, 1601, being aged 94 years, 44 of which he had been Dean of St. Paul's Church ; and that his age had neither impaired his hearing, nor dimmed his eyes, nor weakened his memory, nor made any of the faculties of his mind weak or useless.' 'Tis said that angling and temperance were great causes of these blessings, and I wish the like to all that imitate him, and love the memory of so good a man."

But this sketch of a notable man and his charming book must come to a conclusion. Here are a few lines from the letter of a business man, showing, all unconsciously, why so many in these day's crave the angler's genial pursuit :—"I read several of the first pages, and was struck with the beautiful language ; though I have read it before it seemed quite new to me, and so refreshing. It made me long for that quiet life more than I can tell you. Here we are in the madding crowd, filled with the anxieties which must enter into this age of competition, and with all the daily worries of life. Quiet such as the book speaks of seems to be a great anodyne, but how shall we get it?" And here is Wordsworth's sonnet on Walton, which we only discovered among his poems a few days ago. It ought to be reprinted, and "Angling Days" is the place for it. Written upon a blank leaf in "The Complete Angler" :—

While flowing rivers yield a blameless sport,
Shall live the name of Walton, sage benign !
Whose pen the mysteries of the rod and line
Unfolding, did not fruitlessly exhort
To reverend watching of each still report
That Nature utters from her rural shrine.
Meek, nobly versed in simple discipline—
He found the longest summer day too short,
To his loved pastime given by sedgy Lea ;
Or down the tempting maze of Shawford Brook,
Fairer than life itself in this sweet book,
The cowslip bank and shady willow-tree.
And the fresh meads—where flowed from every nook,
Of his full bosom, gladsome piety !

THE ANTIQUITY OF ANGLING.

IT is quite allowable even for a man who is no antiquary to let his mind run over the past as he knows it from books, and recall references to his favourite pursuit. It is mid-winter, and as we gaze upon the stream—flowing much higher than in summer—which contains only trout, it is not without a wish that grayling had their home in it, to give the lover of the angle a bit of sport when a bright day occurs between September and March. We cannot fish; the next best thing, perhaps, is to read one's angling books, and to think of the art itself.

How long is it since men began to fish? Who cast the first line? We know who used the first umbrella, but where lived the ingenious man who first made the discovery that a line could be thrown better from the end of a rod, and who ascertained that a large fish could be more easily landed, if that implement sprang, yielding, from the top? Our oldest fishing book is "The Art of Angling," dated 1743; but lying beside that ancient book at this moment is a reprint of the first edition of "The Compleat Angler: or, the Contemplative Man's Recreation," by dear old Isaak Walton. The date of this notable book, as we have already seen, is 1653; so that two hundred and fifty years ago angling had its devotees as enthusiastic as any to-day. Taking a backward stride of eighty years,

we have a book by Conrad Heresbach, written in Latin, "De Piscatoine," from which T. Westwood gives extracts in "The Angler's Note Book" for April, 1880. From the same interesting magazine we extract notice of what Mr. Walton W. Skeat calls "the oldest notice of fishing in the English language." It is taken from "Ælfric's Colloquy" in the Cotton M.S., and is written in Latin, with an interline or translation. Here is the conversation between Master and Piscator, the fisher boy :—

"M. : What craft do you exercise ?

P. : I am a fisher.

M. : What do you get by your craft ?

P. : Victuals, clothes, and money.

M. : How do you catch fish ?

P. : I get into my boat and cast my nets into the river, and throw out my angle (hook) and my rods, and whatever they catch I take.

M. : What if the fish be unclean ?

P. : I throw the unclean away, and take the clean for food.

M. : Where do you sell your fish ?

P. : In the town.

M. : Who buys them ?

P. : The townspeople. I cannot catch as many as I could sell.

M. : What fishes do you catch ?

P. : Eels, and luces (pike), and minnows, and eel-pouts, trout, lampreys, and whatever else swim in the river."

That is a most interesting quotation. We can fancy the boys of that far-away time acquiring at once a knowledge of Latin and a taste for fishing. But now we must take a long step backward to the early days of Christian history. We recall good Isaak Walton's mention of the fact that our Lord chose four fishermen for His first Apostles, and also the verse in which he instructed Peter to go to the sea, and, casting a hook, to bring the first fish he caught. Our references reach further back when the prophets of the Old Testament are mentioned. In Isaiah xix., 8, "The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the water shall languish."

Then in Habakkuk i. 15, "They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag, therefore they rejoice and are glad."

There is a mention of fish hooks in Amos (iv. 2) and of fish spears in the ancient book of Job (xli. 7).

And now, leaving the sacred records, we come to that most ancient poet Homer. We took down Pope's translation of the *Odyssey* one evening lately, to refresh our memory with what had charmed us in early days, and presently came across a passage giving a glimpse of an ancient fisherman. Ulysses having made his escape from Circe, has to take his ship through the perilous narrows between Scylla and Charybdis :—

"Now through the rocks appalled with deep dismay,
We bend our course, and stem the desperate way,
Dire Scylla there a scene of horror forms,
And here Charybdis fills the air with storms ;
When the tide rushes from her rumbling caves,
The rough rock roars, tumultuous boil the waves ;
They toss, they foam, a wild confusion raise,
Like waters bubbling o'er the fiery blaze."

As they pass the perilous spot six of his men are, to the great grief of Ulysses, swept overboard ; in poetic language the goddess snatches them aloft. Then occurs the angling figure :—

"As from some rock that overhangs the flood,
The silent fisher casts the invidious food ;
With fraudulent care he waits the finny prize,
And sudden, lifts it quivering to the skies."

Our readers will not need to be reminded that the age of Homer reaches so far back as to be lost in the obscurity where myth mingles with reality ; so that we may affirm that we have here one of the earliest, if not the very earliest, reference to the fisherman's art. If we analyse the few lines which contain the figure we may conclude that in those early days men angled from the land ; that they employed rod and line ; that they had found the necessity of keeping quiet while fishing ; that they used bait ; that they required patience in the employment ; that their tackle was strong ; that they struck sharply ; and that, after the rough fashion of inexperienced fishers in these days, they threw the fish up high by main force. It is evident that fine tackle and "playing" of fish were unknown in that far-off age.

We have put old Homer down, and taken up another book, a recent purchase, "Modern Improvements in Fishing Tackle," by H. Cholmondeley-Pennell—and what a contrast! Here is a book with 250 wood engravings, and all the latest improvements in fishing gear. Through the long line of centuries from Homer's days to ours men have found profit and amusement by the banks of brooks, rivers, and lakes. Anglers are more numerous than ever to-day; and when this generation has, like others, passed away, other men will handle the rod and cast the fly. Our rivers are no longer in danger of being depopulated; but one thing is certain, the fish are becoming better educated and harder to catch. Our successors will need, as an excellent man once remarked, "All the sense they have, and to have all their wits about them!"

WHAT AN ANGLER SEES.

YEARS ago there was a charming article in *Chambers' Journal* with a title similar to the above, and I recall now the pleasure the reading of it gave. There are people who imagine that a fisherman's delight is in the mere slaughter of fish ; who endorse the opinion that a sportsman is one whose first impulse amid the glories of day-dawn will be, "What a splendid morning. Let us go out and kill something !" But anglers know each other better. There are those whose ambition is not simply to come home with a heavy basket ; who at times cease while the eager fish still take the bait ; some even who will say, "There, I have taken enough for to-day," and will stroll leisurely homeward through the woods and fields. Our recreation gives just sufficient pleasant mental occupation to take the mind off the daily cares of life, leaving it open to the kindlier impressions of Nature, and the impulses of gratitude to the Source of all good. Izaak Walton, the father of us all ; Sir Humphrey Davy ; Edward Jesse, the naturalist ; Professor Wilson, Charles Kingsley, and John Bright, to mention only one or two of many, were not less but more devout because they loved "the angler's easy ways." Of course this is not true of all ; but we claim that the pursuit itself and its associations are such as elevate while they recreate the mind. Every angler should

be a naturalist. He should cultivate the power of observation, and employ it as he moves riverward, cheered by the influence of hope, as he moves or sits by the water's edge, and as with contented mind he quietly saunters home. He will thus fill his memory with pictures, and note a hundred incidents in the little-known life of plant, insect, bird or beast.

"When forth at morn the heifers go,
And fill the fields with plaintive low,
Re-echoed by their young confined ;
When sunbeams wake the slumbering breeze
And light the dewdrops on the trees,
Beside the stream I lie reclined,
And view the water spiders glide
Along the smooth and level tide,
Which, printless, yields not as they pass ;
While still their slender, frisky feet
Scarce seen with tiny step to meet
The surface blue and clear as glass.
I love the rivulet's stilly chime
That marks the ceaseless lapse of time,
And seems in Fancy's ear to say—
'A few short suns, and thou no more
Shalt linger on thy parent shore,
But like the foam-streak pass away !'"*

So writes Izaak Walton :—"No life, my honest scholar, no life so happy and so pleasant, as the life of a well-governed angler, for when the lawyer is swallowed up with business, and the statesman is preventing or contriving plots, then we sit on cowslip banks, hear the birds sing, and possess ourselves in as much quietness as these silent silver streams, which we now see glide so quietly by us. Indeed, my good scholar, we may say of angling as Dr. Boteler said of

* John Leyden, M.D.

strawberries, 'Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did': and so, if I might be judge, 'God never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation than angling.' Sketches of scenery may be taken without camera or artist's brush. Here are one or two from an angler's gallery. The first was taken in early spring:—

The River Side.—It is just such a spot as you see in paintings, and linger near it—a spot, which, once seen, is placed as a pleasant picture in the memory. How many thousands such are found in this old England of ours, had men but eyes to see! I am seated on the projecting stone of a rough wall, the noisy river racing along within a few yards distance. The unfenced road is green, not only at its edges, but in the middle, except where the horses' feet and wheels of carts have worn a treble track. A tree, whose stem is silvered with lichen, is right in front, its outermost twigs just showing budding indications of the new life of the year. Below the tree stretches a breadth of stones, some of them large, over which, in flood time, the water rushes. I said the stream was "racing," and this word best describes the eager hurry of its movement. Here and there white foam shows where the water overleaps huge stones lying in its path. The bank opposite is lined with bare trees. Beyond a mossy wall a stubble field awaits the ploughshare, and still further a wooded hill, the slope of which is green with moss. There in a little while the primrose will shine, the slender woodruff climb up by the tree

stems, and the graceful anemone toss its bells in the wind. Above the high bank a line of bare branches shows in clear distinctness against the sky. Over all rain clouds are moving quickly, a sickly light struggling to shine among them. Four wood-pigeons have just hurriedly flown away, as they noticed a strange presence near. Somewhere out of sight I hear the harsh clamouring of rooks. Toward the east the sky in places is a deep blue, but as I note the beauty of the tint, the clouds hasten to cover it. A tiny piece of moss shines like emerald on the wall at my side. How soft the wind is! Its sound amongst the trees is like a loud breathing. The water exactly reflects the colour of the sky. I have seen it blue: to-day it is a dull stone-tint. Everything is subdued: one feels the effect on the spirit within.

Away Fishing.—As there is thunder about, and the trout in consequence have ceased to rise, I seek the leafy shade, and, resting on a stone in the very bed of the stream, enjoy my lunch. Let me look round. The tree under whose shade I rest is a “bird cherry,” and in the spring is covered with beautiful and sweet-scented white flowers. Some of its lower branches are laden with the dry remains of a recent flood. To what a height above its ordinary level has the water risen! The stream makes, in its motion, incessant, monotonous, yet ever-varied melody. Here and there from its shallow bed great stones protrude. How true to life, as always with him, is Wordsworth’s dhrase:—

“ That old *grey* stone.”

About a hundred yards below where I sit a great ash tree bends over the stream, its branches reaching within a yard of the water. I know a big trout has its home just there. The opposite bank shows a fringe of green grass, dotted with bright yellow hawkweed. Beyond this is a wire fence, then the meadow, thick with grass, with a border of trees running along the bank-top—spruce, fir, sycamore, birch, and a slender young elm. Seen against the light, the tall tops of the grass appear like a miniature forest. Now and again a bird flies across the stream. Looking down its course, one can see the whole breadth of the water, winding among stones, until, quite suddenly, it disappears from view where a line of willows skirts the bank. Over the trees a hillside is visible, with walled fields ready for the scythe; and, far beyond, the bare moor, greenish now after the summer showers. But the thunder has ceased, though the heavens remain dark with clouds. I will straighten my “cast” and try again for a trout.

A Sunset Scene.—Let me try to reproduce in words a picture which gladdened me as I gazed upon it. The sun was just setting beyond a rough hill, on the right of which a piece of the white turnpike road was visible. As I leaned against a rough stone wall, which leaned in all directions, the view was presented of a green lane which terminated at the gate of a pasture field. The old wall was moss-covered, with here and there a creeping patch of that “rare old plant, the ivy green.” One large tree, void of foliage, spread its

bare arms accross the line of vision. A small stream ran along one side of the lane, clear as the spring which sent it forth, flowing over stones and waving moss. The bank above it was dotted with primroses, while the hazels in the fence were just coming into leaf. The new verdure of the hawthorn was beautiful in the light of the setting sun. And what a choir of birds celebrated "even-song" in the woods which climbed up the lime-stone scar! One thought of the poet's line :—

" I heard a thousand blended notes."

How pleasant it were to know—as many a farmer's boy knows—the name of every bird from the note it sings! But the sun is going down; the landscape changes; soon night will be here. Let me carry the picture with me of this sunset scene.

A Small Brook.—I am going to sit for a while by this trickling runnel, the vocal ripple of which is just audible, and which has worn a deep course among boulders between these green banks. It comes into view from under a rough stone wall, whose uncemented stones are covered in places with lichen. Just over the wall a daisy-covered slope is seen. Where the brook comes out the stones are thickly covered with damp moss, and on the bank opposite is a bed of young green nettles, the dry stems of last year's growth rising among them. Closer to the stream is a cluster of rushes, some of them dry also. Within the banks I note brooklime, king-cups, lady's mantle, with dog violets higher up the bank where the sunshine falls.

The sycamore close by is just bursting into leaf, bird is answering bird from the trees ; the lowing of a cow is heard in the distance, and nearer the hum of a bee. Now a cock crows, and a rumble of cart wheels on a distant road. These are country sights and sounds. This is the country's heart.

One ought to pray for eyes to see the beauty which is everywhere. A friend of mine was sitting on a green bank gazing with admiration on a marvellous sunset. The sun was sinking amid a blaze of fire. Close by was a stone bridge. A man coming up, my friend said, "Look, is not that glorious ?" "Yes ; a well-built bridge," he replied, as he passed on. He had no eyes for the gorgeous beauty of the sky.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE SEASON.

JUST when the devotees of coarse fishing are regretfully putting away their implements till June, the season for trout begins; and on the 12th of March, 1894, we paid for our licence, and made an early beginning. Too much work compelling a short rest, we took lodgings at Great Corby, a picturesque village on the Eden; and received a most kind permission from the lady at the castle to fish in the preserved water below the village, said to be equal to any in the north of England. The surroundings of the place are most beautiful. The landscape is widespread, and comprises hill and plain, with variety of wood, pasture, and arable land. The river near the village is spanned by a bridge at a great height, wooded slopes reaching to the water's edge. Lower down it passes through an expanse of rich meadow land, beyond which may be seen an ivy-covered church, and, among the trees, the chimneys of a modern castle. Beautiful pictures everywhere gladden the eye. A line of hedgerow is just coming into bud, the boundary of a wide, level meadow. On the bank looking south the sun has called out daisies and yellow celandine, and one or two bushes of self-planted hawthorn stand out from the fence. Moving over the short grass are blackbirds, thrushes, and a whole family of rabbits, some scarcely larger than rats. There are nearly a

dozen of them, happy yet in unconscious ignorance of ferrets, snares, and guns. They will find out in due time that such things exist ! Yonder low fence hides the turnpike road, and from it rises a large spreading tree, bare of leaves. The hillside beyond is fresh ploughed, showing in pleasant contrast to the green meadow-land around. On the ridge above, a line of trees stands clear out against the sky, in which the deep blue is interspersed with masses of white cloud. Far beyond, a higher hill is just visible on the horizon. Pleasant pictures are these to adorn the chambers of the mind.

The day opened unfavourably. Snow had fallen during the night, and though it soon disappeared from the ground, the prospects were not cheering. Chantry, the sculptor, used to carry a thermometer with him when fishing, and if he found the air colder than the water knew there was small likelihood of the trout rising. However we ventured forth as the sun began to shine during the forenoon, to wet our line for the first time this year. It was pleasant to note signs of approaching spring. The hawthorn was budding, the hazel and alder catkins tossing in the wind, and the palm showing its silvery buds. The dark spotted leaves of the lesser celandine were conspicuous among the grass, and on banks touched by the sunshine here and there a golden flower ventured to lift its head. Now a daisy was noticed, a coltsfoot, or the tiny flowerets of the wild strawberry. In the hedges the leaves of the dog-rose bush, the elder, and wild goose-

berry showed signs of the new life of the season, the latter a beautiful emerald ; while the honeysuckle had a bluish tint, the underleaf being almost the colour of bronze. Foxgloves showed on the banks abundantly, with here and there a neighbour in the new-leaved primrose plant. We turned aside into a little wood, to find the ground carpéted with the long blades of wild hyacinth. What waves of blue will presently cover this sheltered space ! Here a dog-mercury was just showing its green, tasselled flower, the first seen this year. Life is everywhere, awaiting for fuller development the growing heat of the sun.

Birds moved in all directions. Thrushes and blackbirds were seen vanishing instantly to the safe side of the hedgerow. How like a scream is the blackbird's note of alarm ! A blue tit hopped out of the fence as we passed, and at the water-side coots started from the willow roots and flew to the opposite bank, almost touching the water in their flight. A large sea-bird like a heron sailed slowly overhead. In the middle of the stream a salmon, with a splash, rose. This was one of the few signs of fish we saw. Two fishermen were following their sport from a boat anchored in mid-stream. The one who was at work—and work it was—had an enormously long rod, from which he flung what seemed a kind of spoon-bait. It was wonderful how great the length of line used in the cast, and how identical was each curving sweep every time it flew out. A salmon leapt a hundred yards upstream and another below, but none regarded the

tempting lure of the angler in the boat. On the river-bank tufts of dried herbage hung from the bending willows, while masses of driftwood and broken reeds lodged against the fences and high up on the pasture, showed how far the late winter's flood had risen. All the seasons almost seemed gathered into one day. Now it was warm and sunny so that an overcoat became superfluous, and the birds began to sing. Then cold rain fell in heavy drops, which smote the river's breast as they were flung down by the wind. Out again shone the sun once more; then came a downpour of frozen snow in shape like hailstones. In the afternoon it actually thundered. The evening was so still that we walked along the river-bank once again, watching the birds and giving audience to their even-song. Two rabbits fed in the field as the light faded. Great clouds rolled over from where the sun had set. Of course we caught nothing. Every angler knows the effect of snow water on the fish. And the thunder—that effectually stops their feeding. So our first day, though not a bad day, was yet a blank.

A DAY'S PIKE FISHING ON THE WYE.

LET me tell a plain, unvarnished tale. In the early months of the year a breakdown in health sent me into South Wales for rest and restoration, and my home was found in a delightful old farmhouse called Gwernyfedd. The Wye flows within a mile or two of the house, and I ventured to ask the Squire, through his steward, for permission to fish, a request which was at once courteously granted. So I sent to Derby for a dozen dace, which came duly by parcel's post, with just a pinch of salt to keep them sweet. I was soon eager for the fray, and the first day by the water-side I landed 18 pound weight of fish, besides losing several. Let me describe the place. In a lovely valley about twenty-five miles above Hereford is the village of Glasbury, with a bridge built in two sections, having been erected by the two counties of Radnor and Hereford. Close by the village the river sweeps round a curve, and here the Llunvi, a fine trout stream, runs into the Wye. Above the meeting of the waters is a deep indentation in the field, and in this back-water—full in flood time—lie the greedy pike, feeding on the plentiful dace and Llunvi trout. It was on this spot I had my memorable day.

I set off in the forenoon, well provided with lunch, a pot of bovril, and matches to make a fire of the abundant drift-wood. An extemporized gaff had been made of a meat-jack, ready to be tied to a stick. To

reach the place the Llunvi had to be crossed on a plank, which the winter flood had forced up on its side, and fixed immovably edgeways. There was no walking over ; the passage had to be made straddling —a leg hanging on each side of the pole. In this fashion, with rod slung round my neck, and much encumbered with fishing bag and lunch, I managed to reach the field on the opposite side. The day, the water, and everything else were right. But for some hours I couldn't get a run, though I trolled hard, and knew the fish were there. Hunger began to bite, and I kindled a fire, set my can on it, made a good cup of bovril, and felt better for my lunch. Then putting on a new bait (I had only six), and fastening my gaff stick to a back coat-button, to leave both hands free, I went at it again. A fish came at me, but was missed, and I threw out far to where the stream touched the still water. A run ! I gave my fish a few minutes' grace and struck. It was a good one and no mistake ! My heart beat quicker with the excitement, and I had to say to myself, "Keep calm." He was brought near land, then off again ! At last I drew him into the shallow water and felt for my gaff. The stick was there, but alas ! the hook was gone. It had dragged off on the ground. Now I held my rod well back, and sought with one hand to grasp the fish. My top part snapped in two ! Next I took hold of the gimp and tried to draw my fish up. The gimp broke, and the fish lay there before me, exhausted but free. Should I lose him ? I threw down my rod, leaped

clear over him into the water, and with both hands heaved him ashore. I gave him a good kick on the head, and then, exhausted myself, walked about to recover at once my calmness and my gaff-hook. It was soon found ; I sat by the fire, spliced my broken rod, and tried again with a new tackle. I lost a fish near an old willow, but presently had another run, and killed a seven-pound fish in fine condition. But now I was done. The excitement had been over much, and the thought came, “ However am I to cross that pole over the Llunvi ? ” Opportunely an old man, pipe in mouth, came on the opposite river bank to look at me. Him I hailed, told him my difficulty, and presently saw him crossing the Wye bridge on his way to the spot. I carried my things at twice to the pole, then dragged my big fish behind me across the field to the place and waited. The old man came up, shrugged his shoulders when I told him how alone he could reach me ; but he bravely got astride the pole and crossed, returning with my big catch slung over his shoulder, needing both hands to work himself over. With handkerchief and strap I managed to carry all across, and the good old fellow carried my two fish for me up to the station, getting some flies and a cast in acknowledgment. Aye, but I was done up ! The smaller fish was given to the wife of the steward, and the larger, which weighed over twelve pounds, was stuffed like a turkey, roasted in a pan in the big oven ; and didn’t those farm servants, five or six of them, have a treat next day !

An angler's memories form no inconsiderable part of his reward, and when, as now, no fishing is available (for where I write we have only trout and salmon) it is a pleasure to pen this sketch of a winter day's fishing.

AMONG MY BOOKS.

IT is during the short, cold, winter days that the angler finds recreation in the pleasures of memory. It is not like open-air exercise. The blue skies above, with leafy trees by the water side, birds singing, and flowers blooming at your feet, while the fresh air sends fresh life through your veins—these are the scenes amid which the worker finds truest recuperation. But to-day the wintry sun shines upon a world white and cheerless. The river is a mass of ice. Scarcely a bird to be seen or heard. Happy is the man who during the wintry months can turn for solace to his books !

Isaac Disraeli, father of Lord Beaconsfield, wrote most interesting books, chiefly compiled from the works of earlier and forgotten writers. And why, I have asked myself, may not I recall some of the stories concerning fish and fishing which, during these long years of book loving and book reading, have given me pleasure ? Kindly hands will help me with the copying ; and surely what has so interested me as to linger long in memory, will give pleasure in the reading to others. Here is a story from across the Atlantic, extracted, by kind permission of the publishers, Messrs. Sampson Low, Son, Marston and Rivingtons, from “Norwood,” a tale written by that great American Henry Ward Beecher. It shall be entitled,

“PETE AND THE BIG TROUT.”

“Pete ain’t growed away from natur’ so far but what he knows what’s goin’ on in beasts and birds. There ain’t his equal in fishing in these parts. The fish just cum, I do believe, and ask him to catch ‘em.

“He don’t take on airs about it, neither. He ain’t stingy. He’d just as soon take you to the best brooks, and the best places, as not. But then that’s nothin’. Very like you can’t catch a fish. The trout knows who’s after ‘em. They want Pete to catch ‘em, not Tom, Dick, and Harry.

“You mind that time he caught that trout out of Holcomb’s mill-pond, don’t you? No? Well, it had been known that there was an awful big fellow livin’ in there. And I know a hundred folks had tried for him. Gentlemen had come up from New Haven and from Bridgeport, and from down to New York a fishin’, and every so many of ‘em had wound up with trying their luck for that big trout, and they had all sorts of riggin’. One, he tried flies, and another worms; sometimes they took the mornin’ and sometimes the evenin’. They knew the hole where he lay. He’d been seen breakin’ the water for one thing and another, but allus when nobody was fishin’. He was a curious trout. I believe he knew Sunday just as well as Deacon Marble did. At any rate the deacon thought the trout meant to aggravate him. The deacon, you know, is a little waggish. He often tells about that trout. Sez he, ‘One Sunday morning, just as I got along by the willows, I heard an awful splash,

and not ten feet from shore I saw the trout, as long as my arm, just curving over like a bow, and going down with something for breakfast. Gracious ! says I, and I almost jumped out of the wagon. But my wife Polly, says she, 'What on airth are you thinkin' of, deacon ? It's Sabbath day, and you're goin' to meetin' ! It's a pretty business for a deacon !' That sort o' cooled me off. But I do say that for about a minute I wished I wasn't a deacon. But twouldn't made any difference, for I came down next day to the mill on purpose, and I came down once or twice more, and nothin' was to be seen, though I tried him with the most temptin' things. Wal, next Sunday I came along agin, and, to save my life, I couldn't keep off worldly and wandering thoughts. I tried to be saying my catechism, but I couldn't keep my eyes off the pond as we came up to the willows. I'd got along in the catechism, as smooth as the road, to the Fourth Commandment, and was sayin' it out loud for Polly, and just as I was sayin' *What is required in the Fourth Commandment?* I heard a splash, and there was the trout, and, afore I could think, I said, 'Gracious, Polly, I must have that trout.' She almost riz right up. 'I knew you wasn't sayin' your catechism hearty. Is this the way you answer the question about keepin' the Lord's Day ? I'm ashamed, Deacon Marble,' says she. 'You'd better change your road, and go to meetin' on the road over the hill. If I was a deacon I wouldn't let a fish's tail whisk the whole catechism out of my head'—and I had to go to meetin' on the

hill road all the rest of the summer. Wal, Pete, he worked down to the mill for a week or two—that's as long as he stays anywhere except at Dr. Wentworth's, and he lets him come and go about as he pleases. And so, one day, says he, 'I am goin' to catch that big trout.' So, after the sun had gone down, and just as the moon riz and lighted up the tops of the bushes, but didn't touch the water, Pete, he took a little mouse he'd caught, and hooked his hook through his skin, on the back, so that it didn't hurt him or hinder his bein' lively, and he threw him in about as far as a mouse could have jumped from the branches that hung over. Of course the mouse he put out lively to swim for his life. Quick as a flash of lightnin' the water opened with a rush, and the mouse went under ; but he came up again, and the trout with him, and he weighed between three and four pound."

J. A. FROUDE IN NORWAY.

Quite recently we have lost this notable man of letters. How deeply I enjoyed reading, years ago, the twelve or fourteen volumes of his "History." If he is not to be relied on for perfect accuracy, how he makes the men and women who surrounded Henry the Eighth and Queen Elizabeth *live!* Let me give two angling incidents from an article of his on Norway, in the first volume of "Longman's Magazine." "I was fishing alone one day in a broad rocky stream, fringed with alder bushes, dragging my landing-net along with me. At an open spot, where there was a

likely run within reach, I had caught a four-pound sea trout. I threw again ; a larger fish rose and carried off my fly. I mounted a 'doctor,' blue and silver, on the strongest casting line in my book, and on the second cast a salmon came. The river in the middle was running like a mill-slue. I could not follow along the bank for the trees ; my only hope was to hold on and drag the monster into the slack water under the shore. My poor little rod did its best, but its best was not enough ; the salmon found its way into the waves, round went the wheel, off flew the line to the last inch, and then came the inevitable catastrophe. The fish sprang wildly into the air, the rod straightened out, the line came home, and my salmon and my bright doctor sped away to the sea."

This is a story with a not uncommon ending. One of the disciplines of fishing is the preservation of self-control under such circumstances. The next has a happier ending. "My eye was suddenly caught by a cascade coming down out of a ravine into the lake which had not been bred in the glaciers, and was limpid as the Itchen itself. At the mouth of this it was just possible that there might be a char or something with fins that could see to rise. It was my duty to do what I could for the yacht's cuisine. I put together my little trout rod for a last attempt, and made my boatman row me over to it. The clear water was not mixing with the blue, but pushing its way through the milky masses, which were eddying and rolling as if they were oil. In a moment I had

caught a sea trout. Immediately after I caught a second, and soon a basketful. They had been attracted by the purer liquid, and were gathered there in a shoal. They were lying with their noses up the stream at the furthest point to which they could go. I got two or three, and those the largest, by throwing my fly against the rocks exactly at the fall. X—— came afterwards and caught bigger fish than I did; and our sport, which indeed we had taken, as it came without specially seeking for it, was brought to a good end."

A SON'S REMINISCENCE.

I cannot refrain from giving an angling illustration from a great preacher, whose father, like himself, was a devoted fisherman. How often is a vital lesson embedded in an unforgetable story! What follows is not from a sermon. Many a sermon would be the better for such illustrations as this.

"I recollect going once with my father a trout fishing. I went with him many times, but I have a special recollection of this time. After riding a mile or two, we came into a road that was unfamiliar to me. There we stopped, and father hitched his horse—that was always safe to be hitched! He then gathered up his rod and line, and we started across the field. My little soul was not big enough to hold the pleasure that I had in going with father to fish, and I ran and capered on behind him, and behaved myself quite like a little dog. Father went on throwing his line, without paying much attention to me. He was a natural born

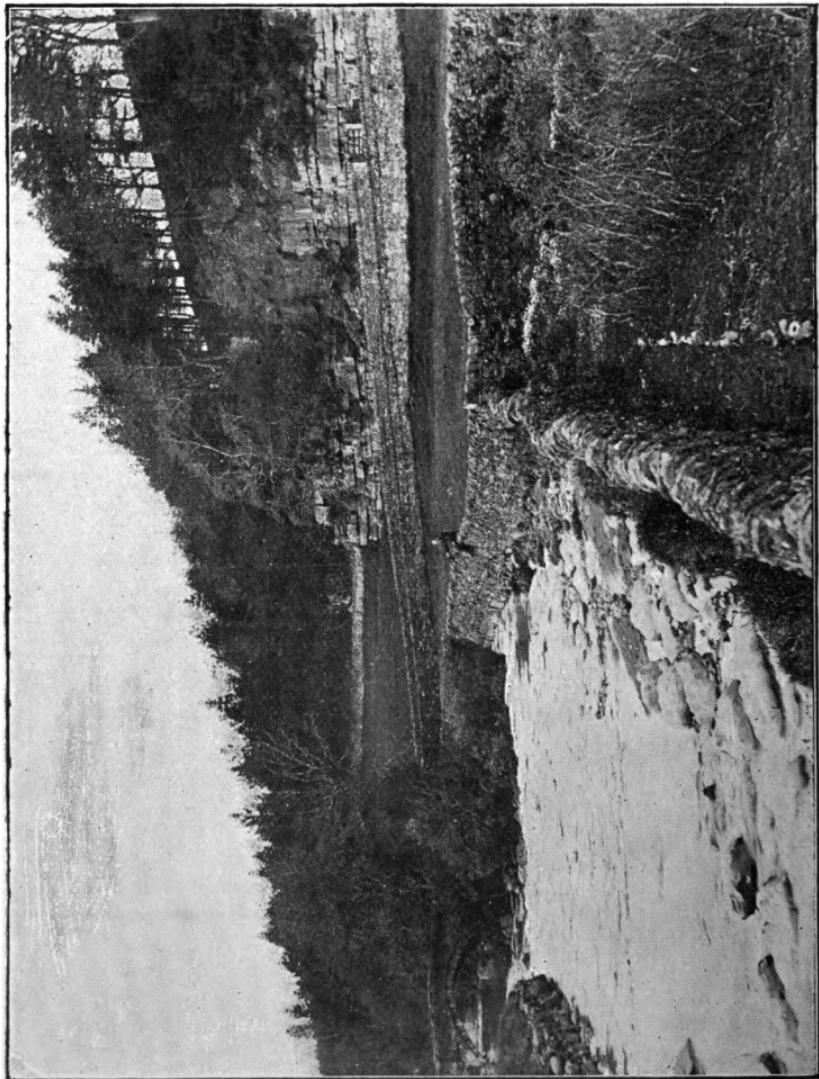
fisherman, and he never threw his line in vain. When we had got across the first meadow, and were climbing over the fence into the second one, a strange fear came over me. We were in an out-of-the way place, and I did not know the way home ; and the thought of being lost frightened me. But I looked back, and could see the carriage top, and that dispelled my fears. So long as I could see the old carriage top I had no trouble in trusting my father. And there are many people who can trust God so long as they can see their way before them.

“ But by-and-bye we got so far that I could not see the carriage top, and then my fear returned, and I said, ‘ Pa, do you know the way home ? ’ ‘ Yes,’ he said, and did not pay much attention to me. That made me feel a little better, and I got along very well till we came to the third fence, when my fears were stronger than before, and I came up to father again and said, ‘ *Pa, do you know the way home ?* ’ ‘ Yes,’ said he, but it scarcely crossed his mind what the meaning of it was. I was comforted once more, and I went on pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat, again, my heart going pit-a-pat too, until we came to still another fence, where there was a kind of thicket, when I could not stand it any longer, and with tears on my face I cried out, ‘ **PA, DO YOU KNOW THE WAY HOME ?** ’ He turned round and put his arms about me, and said, ‘ Why, Henry, I am ashamed of you. Yes, I know the way home. Do you suppose I would take you where I did not know the way ? ’ and he patted me on the

head, and parted the hair on my forehead ; and I was perfectly content after that.

“ Now we are following after our Heavenly Father in about the same way. So long as we can see the carriage top we feel safe ; but when there are no landmarks by which we can distinguish our course we become frightened, and grow short of breath, and say, ‘Lord, dost Thou know the way?’ And he says, ‘Yes, your Heavenly Father knoweth.’ And we are comforted for a little time. But by-and-bye, when we come where it is thicker and thicker, we break down and say, ‘*Lord, dost Thou* know the way?’ And then His Spirit, with infinite tenderness, puts its arms about us, and says, ‘Your Heavenly Father knoweth perfectly.’” I do not think my readers will mind the bit of preaching which follows the story.

ABOVE THE WATERFALL.



AN UNSUCCESSFUL DAY.

THEY may laugh who will, but I affirm that to the true angler all his fishing days are good days. What if he takes nothing? He has a contented mind; his capability of being patient has increased; he has done what he likes to do—and does not happiness lie in that? He has enjoyed a lawful relief from the stress and burden of life, time for profitable reflection has been gained, good thoughts have visited him unbidden; is it strange, then, that he is a better man for his day's fishing, and contented, even though he returns home unladen with spoil?

This is penned as I take my solitary tea in a farm house kitchen, after a whole day spent by the water-side, with one fish as the total result. Throughout the live-long day only two trout have risen to my lure, and of these one was missed. One fish only—yet I sit content and happy. When the excellent Jeremy Taylor, in Cromwell's days, fell into the hands of hard sequestrators, who took from him his living and banished him from his parish, he set himself calmly to calculate how much was left when all seemed lost. "They have left me," he wrote, "the sun and the moon, fire and water, a loving wife, and many friends to pity me." In the same contented spirit, though on a less serious occasion, let me ask what has been gained on a day which must be marked as unsuccess-

ful? It is a distinct gain to have furnished the mind with fresh pictures. Happy is the man who can, with

"That inward eye,
Which is the bliss of solitude,"

see country landscapes when his eyes are shut! Pictures, indeed! What artist's pencil could reproduce, as the living eye beholds it, the outspread upland meadow, dotted here and there with trees, and the over-arching blue heavens across which white clouds sail? Or the sheep and lambs grazing on a green hill side, a flock of peewits feeding on the moist level below, the farmer's man pausing in his hedging to look at the stranger as he passes, and the rustic cottage with white clothes blowing about in the wind, while hens are busy under the lilac which is bursting into bud by the garden fence? Or the bend of yonder stream in which pliant willows dip, with the jackdaws busy in the field close by, one clear-eyed bird perched sentinel-like upon a high tree? Or, again, to see the motion of a hawk hovering above the stream, a black-bird quickly vanishing through the fence, while on a small waterfall the warm sunshine glances, casting the same moment long shadows from the trees upon the grass? How beautiful in remembrance are scenes like these!

It must be confessed that this has been an unsuccessful day. But is it nothing to have beheld the river, the skies, the green fields, the men ploughing on the hillsides, and to have heard the melody of singing birds? Is it nothing to have seen great clouds

rolling from before the sun's beams, and the shadows silently disappearing from the fields ; to have seen trees bursting into bud, and birds mating, and on the warm banks early flowers shining like the newest stars of evening ? Is it nothing to have watched the onward flow of a broad river, blue, almost as the sky above, and seen the salmon leap and splash—a sight that, in our boyhood's days would have been talked of for weeks after—in all this is nothing gained ?

I feel the beauty of the cloudy hills,
The joyous laughter of the sunlit lake,
The music deep with which the sunset fills
The sweet, long hush of evening ; I can take
Delight in hours when Night, the enchantress, stills
The fevered world, and wingéd thoughts awake.

If there is beauty anywhere it is amid these river-side scenes. If music, if pleasant sensations, if instruction conveyed without pain, and sense of Divine goodness that evokes spontaneous gratitude, they are all found here. One onlooker repeated four of David's Psalms as he walked under the trees, and wished that he knew fifty ! That chaffinch, whose sharp " spink, spink " from the branch of a budding sycamore arrested attention, and forthwith commenced its song, must have meant a doxology, so sweet and heavenly was its music.

And thus, to-day, new meaning has come into a phrase from the Old Book, " The earth is full of Thy riches." All this and more on an unsuccessful day.

A MONDAY MORNING.

HERE comes the chance of an hour or two's fishing ; and, though the day is one of the hottest, we may get a trout or two. So away to the Tyneside ! The post is not yet in ; but letters can wait. Past the Workhouse, along a country lane, then through fields so rich in floral beauty that

“ You scarce could see the grass for flowers.”

A word with a man who is busy shearing a patient sheep, and then, as we cross the last field we take our rod from its bag, and the cast of flies from our hat, that when we reach the waterside, no time may be lost. This is the old boyish eagerness. Hurrying to the Trent-side forty years ago, we never could wait till the river was reached to make preparations for fishing. A day far back ! yet we have loved angling through all those intervening years. But here is the river and my favourite place, just where the “ Nattrass burn ” runs into it. The water is surprisingly low and fine considering the rain of Saturday and Sunday. There is nothing for it but to fish up-stream, keeping well out of sight. The line is wetted in the “ burn,” and almost at the first throw a good fish is hooked, close under the bank, and played down-stream to be landed. He took the sand-fly. Before that place is left we have three or four fish. Walking quietly up, it seemed almost ridiculous to fish in such clear water—indeed

two excellent men, who, with rods laid along in the grass, were smoking their pipes, said as much. They had done nothing. "It's the smoking," we remarked. Working on, we added another, and another, throwing back half-a-dozen small ones, until by noon we had eight or ten. But how the sun's rays beat down ! It was pleasant to find a stone, conveniently placed in the shade of some trees, on which to rest awhile. Near by babbled the burn. Overhead sang the lark. Everywhere the ground was covered with flowers—trefoil, hawkweed, yellow crosswort, and lady's mantle, and that queen of the Cumberland flora the globe flower. Among the grass grows the deep blue milkwort, while the bank above where I sit blooms like a garden with purple geranium, brown wood avens, and the curious hound's tongue, whose tall stalks show the unformed flower. Soon after noon the day becomes more cloudy, and fishing begins again. But the trout are shy. Perhaps, like some men, they are taking a mid-day rest. To the angler, the very exercise is recuperative. He notices that as soon as he settles to his work there comes to him that last evidence of a mind at rest—the continuous repetition of some often trivial thought. Memory seems to say, "Now there is leisure for play"—and play it does. People talk of studying as you fish ! It is happily impossible. Tennyson, true to fact in the beauty of his verse, overlooked nothing. Hence he wrote :—

"I cast me down, nor thought of you,
But angled in the higher pool.

A love song I had somewhere read,
An echo from a measured strain
Beat time to nothing in my head,
From some odd corner of my brain.

It haunted me the morning long,
With weary sameness in the rhymes,
The phantom of a silent song
That came and went a thousand times."

How exactly these lines depict an angler's experience! But the sun has gone behind a cloud. We may now begin again, fishing down-stream, and using the long cast. We bring out three or four too small for the basket, and return them, with injunctions to come again when they are bigger. But will they? Have fishes memory? It would seem not; nor much feeling, for a trout will take a second fly with the one with which he broke you still in his lip. But it is now two o'clock, and we have had four hours of it. It is our habit, soon as the word "tired" presents itself (that is, when the sport itself wearies), to pause, and "part up," as Nottingham men say, and turn our steps homeward.

As lunch was being eaten in a cool grove, we noted that a few late primroses still lingered among the gaudier June flowers, as if loth to depart; also the beauty of form and colour manifest in the ferns by the "burn" side. Our basket is slightly heavier than when we started; we have enjoyed some pleasant hours of entire freedom from care; and there has been spontaneous gratitude to Him

"Who only is the Maker
Of all things near and far,

Who paints the wayside flower
And lights the evening star."

This bit of genial recreation has fitted us to do better
the work which lies before us during the week.

Where birds and brooks from leafy dells
Chime forth unwearied canticles,
And vapours magnify and spread
The glory of the sun's bright head,
Still constant in her worship, still
Conforming to the eternal Will,
Whether men sow or reap the fields,
Divine monition Nature yields,
That not by bread alone we live,
Or what a hand of flesh can give,
That every day should leave some part
Free for a sabbath of the heart ;
So shall the seventh be truly blest,
From morn to eve, with hallowed rest.

— *Wordsworth.*

AN OCTOBER DAY

ONE of the brightest of mornings calls me away to the river side. The sun is shining brightly from a clear sky, a deep blue, with white masses of cloud in the lower heavens. The fields are a lovely emerald. They are greener and the skies a deeper blue sometimes in October than in any other season. The autumn change is manifest in the trees, many of which are already bare of leaves. And here is the river, clear at present, making incessant music among the stones. Here is a broken bank where I may begin. On the opposite side the quiet sheep graze among the dry bracken. As I put my rod together, glad to be amid these scenes, I wish myself a good day.

Let me try this strong stream first. It is a place where one would expect the salmon trout to lie, under the rocks against which the stream gurgles. In a flood they feed lower down at the tail end of the stream. My tail fly is silver-bodied—the fish like a bit of glitter. But no rise rewards my first endeavour.

Ah! there's a squirrel coming near me, with an acorn in its mouth. Let me stand motionless and watch it. A graceful little quadruped, with bright, quick-moving eyes. It comes nearer, hesitates, sits up, sees danger in my presence, and is off in a second.

Now let me walk up the river-side to the next

likely place. It is rough walking—now across a pasture or turnip field, now through a sloping wood and now over a rough wall into a dell where a small burn runs noisily. Up these little runnels the salmon climb—for climbing it is—and go to lay their spawn where there is scarcely water enough to cover them. Alas, how many fall an easy prey to hands that have no scruples! Yet one cannot greatly blame a poor man whose eye sees in the fish lying there a meal for his children.

But let me tramp ahead. Ah! what is this? Every angling day has its adventure, great or small. Either a bull chases the nervous piscator, or he falls into the water, or a huge fish “smashes everything.” Here is a noticeable event for to-day—for in yonder pool a ram lies with its four feet fast in the mud. I try in vain to induce it to make an effort to free itself, and lay down my rod and bag while I seek help at the farm on the hill. The creature gives a pitiful bleat as I move away. Wait a little, poor beast.

“ He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small,
For the great God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”

So I am in duty bound to help you. There is only an old lady at the house; I therefore eat my lunch with a glass of good milk and wait till the maid arrives. We take a strong rope, and set off on our errand of rescue. Oh! what a job we have. The sheep is either stupid or cramped, for it will not move. The

girl goes right into the morass, and works wading. The rope is passed under the creature's body, and together we pull. It is moved nearer the bank ; that is something. Now the old lady comes ; six hands pull in unison, the sheep takes heart and tried, and at length is heaved on the bank. Hurrah ! Now it walks staggering up the field, departing without a word of thanks.

What next ? Here is a likely place where the narrowing streams forms a fine pool below. Now for another serious try. Almost the first throw our rod snaps like a carrot, just above the first ferrule. Patience ! We will walk quietly to the farm again, and burn out the wood. It might be worse. Soon done ; and now across the pleasant sloping fields to the river side again. For some time we only see one fish. It comes at the fly near some stones, but never shows itself again.

It is now three o'clock, and bone and muscle alike begin to show weariness. A mile higher up stream stands the hospitable house where we shall be welcomed to a cup of tea. But here is a place where the water rushes foaming over great stones. Let us move downward, making a cast or two. Ah ! there's a fish and no mistake. Just in the "boil," by that protruding rock, the fly is taken. There is no time to think of striking the fish, for away it goes down stream like a shot, the reel as quickly emptying itself. There is nothing for it but to run, racing over and among the great boulders. The dark line running

out shows that twenty yards of new line are off, and the fish is still going. However, just then we manage to check him, get the light line round the reel once again, and begin to use a firmer pressure. A hundred yards off stands a brother angler, the first we have seen to-day. A sharp whistle brings him to the bank with ready help. We have steered the fish into a little bay between the rocks, and here he plays up and down, held back at each attempt to escape. Now he is in the net—a beauty to see! But how slenderly hooked; it was a marvel he was secured.

Now we *will* have some tea. Refreshed, we try the river again. The evening shades soon fall after five o'clock. It is October, not June. Our eyes grew tired of watching the dip of the fly, and the monotonous run of the water. So we finish, enjoy the walk home in the stillness, and find our capture is just under three pounds.

WINTRY DAYS AND AN ANGLER'S BOOKS.

NOW that the snow lies cold upon the hills, the trees are bare, the waters frozen, and one's rod and bag placed high on the shelf till the welcome season returns, I may put together some choice extracts from my books, and frame a gossipy article for others, who, like myself, are denied for the present our favourite pastime. It is well to have more hobbies than one. Happy is the man who finds in his books a pleasure as great as that which comes when, set free from the pressure of daily duty, he stands or walks by the quiet stream-side, where flowers and birds and he are friends! I always affirm that the man who does not love reading lives only in half a world. It is as though one whole set of faculties was left unused. The man who reads widely will not only acquire treasures of knowledge, but often meet with thought and fact touching the things which interest him most. In one book I find something which newly illustrates a scripture text, in another a choice bit of poetry, in a third a curious fact in natural history, and in others, sometimes in very unlikely places, an interesting passage bearing on fish or fishing. For example, reading quite lately a history of the Highland clans, in which accounts are given of the earliest ages, the following was noted:—"Their whole means of sub-

sistence consisted of the milk and flesh of their flocks, and the produce of the chase. The piscatory treasures with which the rivers and waters of Caledonia abound appear to have been but little known to them; a thing not to be wondered at, when it is considered that the Druidical superstition proscribed the use of fish. Their dislike to this species of food continued long after the system of the Druids had disappeared; and they did not abandon this prejudice till the light of Christianity was diffused among them.”*

Serious readers are sure to mark one point, that in Scotland at least, fishing came in with Christianity. But the student of natural history will note with some gratification that an example in the gentle art is found in nature itself; a most curious fact known to those who love to ponder the evidences of intelligent contrivance in spheres where the mind of man has no control.

There is a species of terrapin at the Zoological Gardens which is in the fortunate position of not having to work for a living. Like the children in the fairy tale, it has simply to open its mouth and food will drop in. In the mouth of this reptile is a little tag of flesh, which is in continual vibration, and nearly always visible, for the creature remains open-mouthed for hours together. It is believed that the sight of this is particularly alluring to the piscine mind; the fish commits the very pardonable though fatal error of mistaking it for a wriggling worm, and in trying to take the bait is caught in the trap and swallowed.

Sometimes a book-lover waits for years to obtain an old volume which, it may be, he has handled in a friend's house. Such has been my experience with regard to Thomas Miller's "Rural Sketches," a man who began life as a basket-maker near the Trent, went to London, and wrote among many other works, "Gideon Giles the Roper," a forcible story of country life. He it was who introduced me to William Browne, a poet of the days of Queen Elizabeth. How true to the life is Browne's description of the capture of a pike :—

"Now as an angler melancholy standing
Upon a green bank, yielding room for landing,
A wriggling yellow worm thrust on his hook,
Now in the midst he throws, then in a nook ;
Here pulls his line, there throws it in again,
Mending his hook and bait, but all in vain,
Long doth he stand viewing the curled stream ;
At last a hungry pike, or well-grown bream
Snatch at the worm, and hasten fast away ;
He knowing it a fish of stubborn sway,
Pulls up his rod, but soft : as having skill
Wherewith the hook holds fast the fish's gill—
Then all the line he freely yieldeth him,
Whilst furiously all up and down doth swim
The ensnared fish ; here on the top doth scud,
There underneath the banks, then in the mud,
And with his frantic fits so scares the shoal,
And each one takes his hide or starting hole :
By this the pike, clean wearied, underneath
A willow lies—"

In that charming work, "The Sketch Book," of Washington Irving, there is a delightful account of an old angler whom the author met on the banks of the Alun, in Wales. He was so taken with his new acquaintance that "under pretext of receiving instruc-

tions in his art," he says, "I kept company with him nearly the whole day ; wandering along the banks of the stream, and listening to his talk. Writing of the art of angling, he says, in his own lucid style :— "Indeed, it is an amusement peculiarly adapted to the mild and highly cultivated scenery of England, where every roughness has been softened away from the landscape. It is delightful to saunter along those limpid streams which wander, like veins of silver, through the bosom of this beautiful country ; leading one through a diversity of small home scenery ; sometimes wandering through ornamented grounds ; sometimes brimming along through rich pasturage, where the fresh green is mingled with sweet-smelling flowers ; sometimes venturing in sight of villages and hamlets, and then running capriciously away into shady retirements. The sweetness and serenity of nature, and the quiet watchfulness of the sport, gradually bring on pleasant fits of musing, which are now and then agreeably interrupted by the song of a bird, the distant whistle of the pheasant, or, perhaps the vagary of some fish, leaping out of the still water, and transiently moving about its glassy surface."

Is not that a choice bit of writing ? Irving makes you live and move among the scenes he describes.

I have always been an admirer of *Chambers' Journal*, and many a pleasant hour has been spent in companionship with old volumes of that interesting serial. Shall I soon forget a time when a sick man laid aside from the work he loved, picked up at

Blackpool where he lodged among strangers, an odd volume for a few pence, and found relief in its pleasant pages? Twelve years ago there appeared an interesting account of a tame trout, which lived in a tank holding about eighty gallons of water. He used to be fed on spiders, and was educated enough to prefer those which were fat and juicy. He would have nothing to do with wasps or hairy caterpillars. When he got hold of a large worm he would rush up and down his tank at great speed. He would not look at a dead thing. Here is the account of his manner of taking food, not without a suggestion to the intelligent trout fisherman:—

“ His manner of taking his prey varies. If the insect sinks in the water, he quietly swims up to it, seizes it, then turns round and returns to his lurking-place. Sometimes he takes the food before it reaches the bottom of the tank; at others he picks it off the gravel which forms the bed of the aquarium; but there is never any hurry. It is, however, very different, when the bait lies on the surface or hangs suspended above the water. Then he comes with a rush and splash, making nervous people ‘jump,’ especially when—as is frequently the case—they are peering over with noses down, declaring they ‘cannot see anything.’ This rush is not the result of fear or trepidation, but arises from his knowledge—instinctive, if you like—that, while beneath the surface, an earthworm, or spider, or anything not a fish, can be captured at leisure, there is no such certainty as to things above

the water. He seems to be aware that they may elude him or take wing, unless he is very sharp. So far from feeling any fear, he will always, when hungry, and seeing me at the edge of his tank, come out from his favourite lurking-place, and place himself immediately below the outstretched hand in which I hold the expected spider, waiting till I let it fall. Sometimes he executes a preliminary flourish up and down the tank." It seems that when he rose to seize an insect on the surface, he turned over and showed his spotted sides.

The following is taken from a London evening paper:—An extraordinary angling experience has befallen two gentlemen while angling in the river Witham, near Grantham. A live gudgeon, attached to a hook, was cast into the stream as a bait for a pike. On the float beginning to move rapidly, the angler struck for a fish, but was greatly surprised to see a large water-rat leap out of the river with the gudgeon in its mouth. The rat made across the meadow with the angler after it, but succeeded in escaping. About three hours afterwards the line was found two hundred yards from the place where the rat had taken it, but hook and fish were missing.

I could wish all my readers knew Charles Kingsley—devout and fervent as a minister of religion, a friend of working men, who dealt, perhaps in "Alton Locke," the first blows at what is now called "sweating," and an enthusiastic fisherman. His "Chalk and Stream Studies" are wonderful examples of poetic description.

Before he died, his daughter heard him say to himself, “How beautiful God is.” He says of the angler at his pastime:—“There as he wades he sees a hundred sights and hears a hundred tones, which are hidden from the traveller on the dusty highway above. The traveller fancies that he has seen the country. So he has—the outside of it at least; but the angler only sees the inside. The angler only is brought close face to face with the flower, the bird and insect life of the rich river banks, the only part of the landscape where the hand of man has never interfered, and the only part in general which never feels the drought of summer. ‘The trees planted by the waterside whose leaf shall not wither.’”

These selections may fitly close with a glimpse of another good man, whose name is well known, and whose wife, Mrs. Josephine Butler, has done much to make the life of England sweeter and purer. What follows only adds one more to the long list of excellent men who have found recreation at the waterside:—

“Those who knew my husband only in his last years can scarcely realise his marked character as an out of door man and the keenest of sportsmen. That character was strong in him to the end. I have sometimes been unable to repress a smile in some solemn public meeting when he occupied a prominent place on the platform. I have seen (I used to hope that others did not see it—at least, if they were unappreciative), the furtive movement of his right hand, the graceful turn from side to side of the wrist, and the

far off look in his eyes. He was fishing in imagination! He was in spirit in dear Glendale, casting for trout in the Till or the College Burn, among banks of birchen trees and sweet clear pools, wherein his quick eye followed

“Here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling.”

And thus he would beguile the time through some uninteresting argument, or long-drawn peroration, such as sometimes intervene to vary the monotonous enthusiasm of public demonstrations.”

AN ANGLER'S HOLIDAY.

AT last the opportunity came, and home and work were left behind for a fortnight's recreation amid fresh scenes and genial society. Every true man will perform faithfully the appointed task of his life, but all work is better done for an occasional change between work and play. So we set off on Bank Holiday, booked to an old-fashioned little town in North Yorkshire, where the limestone protrudes picturesquely among the green of the ancient hills, and where a quick-flowing river makes its way through pleasant meadows, unpolluted by the poisonous refuse of the manufacturing town. Others were travelling on similar business. On the opposite seat in our compartment sat a fellow-passenger arrayed in a brand new light suit, with boots and cap to match, whose attentions were divided between a bulky "Bradshaw" and Black's "Guide to the Lake District." The platform at the town where we changed trains swarmed with holiday seekers; the invariable accordion made melody in the waiting-room; it was harvest time with the obliging porters, and people's faces showed that they were going to and not returning from their brief holidays. On, then, we sped, noting the corn in shocks, and the hill-side down which the merry burns ran, till at length we caught sight of the river on whose banks we hoped soon to stand, its peaty waters show-

ing the white foam as it raced over the stones. The little town was enjoying holiday. Shops were closed, excursionists were loitering here and there, a cricket match was in progress, and we failed not to notice the bent form of an angler on the river bank, basket on back, and arm extended in the approved attitude readers of *The Angler* know so well. An enjoyable tea was followed by the unstrapping of our rod and bag, and a friend opportunely calling to suggest that we try the water, away we went. No licence could be obtained till next day, but we ran all risks for once.

There was rather over much water for the fly, but we tried a March-brown first, not seeing a fish move for some time ; then, just below a hawthorn, whose branches drooped over the water, there came a tug, the reel span musically, and a fair-sized fish was soon on the bank. The evening shades gathered quickly ; it was only at a rare interval that "a rise" showed on the surface, but another fish completed a brace for to-morrow's breakfast. The sun had set calmly, and we returned hungrily to our lodgings, not without

"Hope for the toils of the morrow."

The second day was soft and cloudy, with transient gleams of sunshine. A licence was procured, and the forenoon found us awaiting the good pleasure of the trout. Not much was done. Somehow the fish were slow to rise. We tried them with flies which took well last season, tried them under the bushes and in the broad shallows, tried them up-stream and down-

stream, in the sunshine and in the dusk, until we could no longer see our flies—but all in vain. So we came to our “diggings” tired, but indulging in the pleasures of hope. Next day we went forth with expectation, to be again disappointed. Not a fin moved, though water, wind, and sky were alike favourable. We thought it possible there was thunder in the air; its approach is an unfailing preventative of sport. This is noticeable, for a coming storm awakens to activity the insect and animal world. Gnats bite, wasps sting, the cattle become restless, and eels, as all anglers know, are eagerly “on the feed.” But trout sink to the bottom, as still as the stones amongst which they lie. The question is: Why do they? Does the approaching storm affect them, or do they stop rising in instinctive anticipation of a coming feed? And how is it when the larger fish retire to their deep haunts the small fry are unusually lively? Experienced anglers expect poor success when the little fish leap about. It was so on this day. The record made was: “A dull, close morning; nice fly-water; few fish stirring; none, of any size, caught.”

It is this element of glorious uncertainty which adds interest to the angler’s pursuit. He goes out when all the conditions are favourable, and fails to take a fish. Again, an attempt is made when everything seems against success, and it meets him abundantly. One hot afternoon a brother angler went to the water-side, while others waited till the evening’s cool brought the fish on the rise. He did splendidly

in the hot sun, but towards five o'clock, suddenly the fish stopped rising. That promising evening proved a blank to all. This led us, on one of the hottest days of the season, when the glare made a shako necessary, go forth and try our luck. Two mere sprats were hooked, nothing else stirring. We waded through a mass of butterwort and tried in vain the best streams. Two men passed gathering mushrooms, and we were ready to say their's was the better job, when just under a bush, in a whirl of water, a good fish was hooked. A little below a smaller one took the fly. We came to a rippling shallow, and threw right across it. Ah, a fish has taken our tail-fly, the small March-brown. Now another! Come, my beauty, the net is ready. At a short distance another similar ripple awaited us, and the first cast brought to bank the best fish yet. But how the sun burned! We quietly walked upstream homeward, trying likely places here and there; but nothing more was done.

After a strong wind in the night, the next day brought the thunder. What a tempest we had! It seemed to travel round the hills, and come back to the same point again. This explained our want of success.

One day we spent a quarter of an hour, not without interest, watching the motions of three small trout in a brook which ran under the turnpike road. Their shelter was beneath a stone arch, the sides of which were moss-covered, and adorned with flowers of the lesser willow-herb. While the fish were in perpetual

motion, each appeared to retain its own position in the stream, darting now this way or that, with an action surprisingly rapid, whenever a fly floated down. Their heads were kept up-stream, but nothing to the right or left of them passed unnoticed. Their tails moved, rudder-like, perpetually. Once a larger fish moved to the place where another was feeding, and displaced it. The other, however, was soon back in its old position. The smallest trout, a little longer only than one's finger seemed in fear of the others, and kept at a respectful distance. When a fly was taken a small spreading circle appeared for an instant, and the fish was back in its old spot again. One let itself backward a good way down the stream, but only for a little while. We lifted our hand so that a moving shadow fell near them, instantly they became uneasy, and moved away out of sight.

Here is an entry from our note-book :—" If one may not catch fish, it is at least possible to sit on this green bank and sketch the scene, where before me the sun is going down amid a ruddy haze. Its light streams through those swaying willows upon the surface of the water, ruffled now with the evening breeze. A transparent mist overspreads the hill-side, giving a peculiar appearance to the dark trees standing out among it. Lines of thick cloud (stratus) hide the sun's disc ; and now it is gone, almost suddenly, leaving a glow upon the sky just above the place of its disappearance. One bright spot gleams through an opening in the cloud. A flock of peewits, showing

black and white, pass between the trees and the skyline. Already an appearance of chilly gloom creeps over the river and the fields. The wind moans now, as it rises. Perhaps the trout will rise also. Let us try them."

It is something to put pictures in the memory ; and of these we certainly carried back not a few.

During the last four days nothing was attempted ; nothing done. It was something to lean over the bridge and watch good-sized trout feeding actively in full view, or, as we walked the river bank, note a good fish dart away to cover. There were walks to be had, books, and pleasant company ; and when on the Saturday morning we stood on the railway platform, awaiting the train which was to speed us away to the old familiar scenes, we felt a tranquil gratitude that our holiday had been so pleasant, and that, please God, another summer might find us here again.

UP THE RIVER IN NOVEMBER.

THE month is just closing. Its last day but one opens with a white glow at sunrise, after a tempestuous night. Our fishing on the South Tyne has long closed, and we have no roach, grayling, or pike to keep the rods going during the winter months. There, above the books in the study, hang my three well-used rods, the landing net and gaff. It will be April before they can be handled again. But the morning is fine, and though no fish may be caught, an angler's instinct takes one's feet toward the river side. The sky is blue overhead, so blue as to colour the river deeply as we see it in the distance ; while nearer, its brownness shows that there has been rain during the night. The fields are whitey-brown, the moss showing thickly near the stone walls. By the river side the reeds stand quaking, dry and white. The trees are bare of leaves except the Scotch spruce and firs. No birds are seen except a few finches, and here and there a magpie. How desolate the river seems as it rolls along ! The pensive form of an angler on its banks would lend a distinctly human interest to the scene. How lifeless everything appears ! The cattle graze quietly ; even the sheep, startled at the sudden intrusion, look up for a moment, and then continue to graze. But here is the river bank, with the rapid stream, where we picked out the trout in

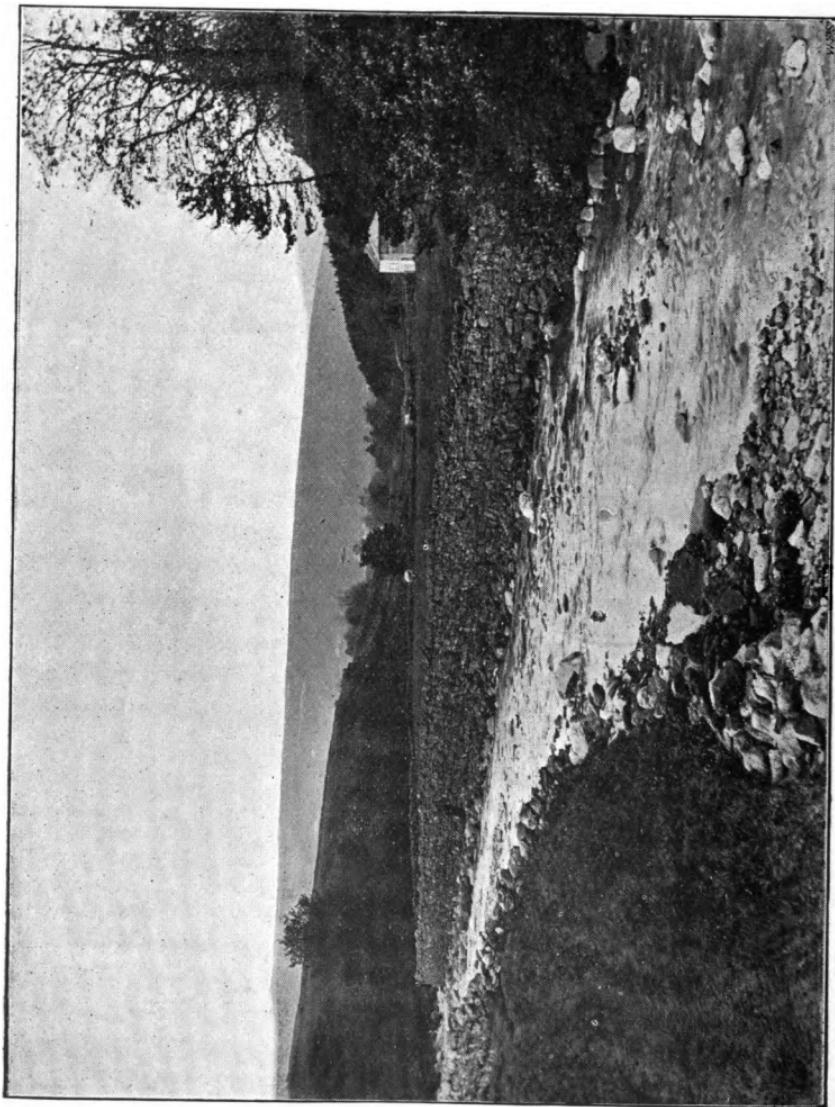
September, before the season closed. Why the water is just right ; what a colour ! If one might but cast over that bend ! Here is a little burn, running below overhanging bushes. We look down, and see a fair-sized trout make for its lair. A note is made of this, and we pass on. Here, under this plantation, is the sharp stream where we heard the "swish" of a salmon trout as our fly passed near it. And beyond, where the burn joins the big stream, is the very spot where we caught with a large *March-brown* our first bull trout. The tug-of-war was just there, above that overhanging bush. It was with much agitated nerves that we saw him safe on the bank—and tried no more that day ! Let me ramble a little up the burn side. Here are primrose leaves showing among the thick moss, and the poly-poddy fern shows green still upon the tree trunks. Shall I see a spawning salmon, I wonder ? Ah ! there are a pair of trout in the shallows ! One darts off ; but I see the waving tail of his fellow behind that big stone. Now, let me, for the first time in my life, try to "tickle a trout." Off go glove and cuff, and I put my hand slowly down and touch the fish, feeling it move. Ah ! it is gone, and I note that it was about four ounces, and looked black. "I'll come and visit this place again, 'says I to myself, says I.' " But I must look at the river again, and at the fields beyond, where the grouse lie. Overhead the clouds gather. Where is the fair blue sky now ? Down comes the pelting rain ; I shelter under the trunk of a big tree, then wend my homeward way,

glad that there is pleasure by the river side, even in cold November.

“ To Hermes, guardian of each gainful trade,
This offering from the fisher's stores be made :
My net, that hath so many a fish undone ;
Reed, hair and hook, three stratagems in one ;
The lead that weights the cork that buoys the line,
The wicker-woven basket trap : in fine,
All wiles I used the unwary fish to hem,
And all the colds I caught in catching them.”

THE GREEK ANTHOLOGY,

Translated by R. GARNETT.



ON THE NEWT, NEAR ALSTON,

ANGLERS' TALK.

WHEN THE FISH ARE "OFF IT."

THE pressure of daily work is off our minds this Monday morning, so let us away to the waterside and see what can be done among the trout. We can talk as we go and as we rest on the bank, comparing notes as to our sport. Fish or no fish, we shall see the skies and green fields, hear the hum of insects and the melody of birds ; the fresh moorland breeze will put colour in our cheeks and give us appetite for our lunch ; there is sure to be something to enrich our minds and fit us to do better the daily task. So away to the waterside !

I am glad, in fishing, to have a friend to talk to. Even if we separate and follow our pastime a good distance apart, each knows the other is there, within call, if (as happened one day to a friend of mine who drove his hook right beyond the barb into his finger) an accident calls for neighbourly help, or, if better, the hooking of a big fish in a strong stream makes it desirable for a friend to run at your whistled call, to see the fight and show himself handy with the net.

The morning rises clear and sunny. "What will the day be ?" we ask of a man who is returning from disposing of his morning's milk. "There will be

showers," is his reply. It is past nine o'clock, and we set off under blue skies, flecked with white clouds, a soft west wind blowing. A first glimpse of the river shows it to be a nice colour, and a little higher than usual. Noting these favourable signs, there come the uprising of hope and the eager desire to make a beginning.

"What's i' the air?
Some subtle spirit runs through all my veins,
Hope seems to ride this morning on the wind,
And joy outshines the sun."

But we have a two miles' walk along a country lane, the green banks of which are alive with flowers. It is a distinct pleasure to know their names, to give them, as it were, a saluting nod as we pass—purple clover, lady's mantle, common bugle, wood avens. Friends ye are, every one! A man once said: "I am no botanist, but fond of flowers. I am no theologian, but I love Jesus Christ." Is not that the 'very thing? The beautiful in character, as in form and colour, is always attractive.

But here is the bridge over the burn, where we 'may put our rods together, wet our lines, and commence operations. The water underneath babbles musically, and, glancing over the stonework, one can see the white curl over the great stones. If the fish are only in the humour to feed! There is always the glorious uncertainty as to whether anything or nothing will be caught. While our lines are softening in the water, let me read a bit from *Baily's Magazine*

on the education of fish. We live in days of School Boards and technical education. It really does seem as if the very fish in our rivers have caught the infection of mental advancement. Listen to this:—

“In a stream where daily during the season anglers congregate, casting with more or less accuracy and delicacy over every rising trout, sometimes rising them short, sometimes hooking them, and then, either in the first headlong rush of the terrified fish, or later, before it is quite exhausted, the hold of the tiny hook breaking out, a sense of insecurity must in time be developed. Even if the trout does not rise, the frequent appearance in so unaccountable a manner before it of so many flies must seem strange. Perhaps it would be more accurate to describe them as bearing some faint resemblance to the flies on the water, for, after all, the most cunningly-devised and artistically-finished patterns are at best but poor imitations of nature. The fact, too, of this bad counterfeit either not floating at all like the natural insect or floating in an eccentric fashion, either more rapidly or more slowly than the stream, or being dragged across its true course, may well arouse suspicion. Then, too, the invariable concomitant of the two-legged animal, brandishing a long wand clearly defined against the sky-line must, if the trout has any semblance of memory, become in time a danger signal. The very popularity of fly-fishing, and more especially of that particular form of it called dry-fly fishing, is said in itself to be one of the causes of want of sport. The

fish, from frequent and painful experience, in time are actually described as acquiring a dread of indulging their appetite for the floating insects, and hence gradually accustom themselves to seeking their food in the comparative safety of mid-water or the bed of the stream. Some of the most eminent writers are of opinion that the modern practice of returning undersized fish is responsible for a large proportion of their shyness, as it is natural that trout, which, in their early youth, have been frequently tempted to take artificial fly, and either pricked or landed and returned to their native element, develop a wholesome dread of all insect food."

But let us try under the bridge. Not seldom have we picked up a good trout or two right under the wall. Not a rise rewards the effort. The first half-hour shows that the fish are "off." Only baby trout are moving, and along the whole length of the stream, so far as the eye can see, not the sign of a rising fish is visible. Let us try higher up, past yonder bend, where the unvarying greenness is relieved by heaps of spar from a once productive lead mine. As we walk we talk. Remembrance of unsuccessful days is recalled. We talk of the rising of hope, as experienced by the angler as he comes with freshness of mind to his task.

For some time, it may be, his flies fall vainly upon the stream, passing unheeded over the likeliest spots. It is excellent practice in casting—now far out, now near; the flies dropping gently upon the

water's face, like the natural insect of which they are a counterpart. But it is dull work. Presently, however, one small fly flits from the bushes near him, then another, and by-and-bye one or two are seen sailing down the stream. Hope rises faintly. Surely the fish will be astir directly. Next, a fish rises to the surface and sucks in a drowning fly. It may be only a small fish, for such usually open the play. Hope springs higher. Each cast is more carefully made. Now a fish rises to the tail fly, and is nearly hooked. This is better. But it is when the first fish is played and landed, that the true zest animates the angler. He warms to his work, his very body sharing the exhilaration of his spirit. And now for sport. They are coming on. Up, guards, and at them !

Thus talking, we follow the stream, past the mine-heaps, into a perfect solitude half a mile beyond. High fells, covered with heather and bracken, rise on either side the winding dale through which the burn now meanders quietly, and now races among impeding stones. On the opposite bank are masses of flowers, with a few spikes of fox-glove towering above the rest. But the fish will not look at the fly. At this very spot, one morning in the spring, when the east wind was still cold to the face, one of us caught a nice dish. Then, everything was adverse, yet success came ; to-day, with all conditions favourable, nothing can be done. Are the trout expecting rain ? Or, is there thunder about ? In two hours we have changed our flies three times, but without avail. Never mind ;

let us go higher up the burn, and eat our lunch where the waters meet near a wooden bridge. There are one or two good streams near. You don't know them? Well, I can show you. Every angler knows the importance of being well acquainted with the river he fishes. Fish have haunts. Though a good angler's experience helps him, on a strange water, to discern the likely places, he is at a disadvantage compared with one who knows the locality. For occasionally the most promising places hold no good fish, while unlikely spots harbour them. In a two miles' length of fishable water there may be five or six places in which good fish are permanent residents. It is "love's labour lost" to cover all the length of the stream. But here is the bridge. We are both ready for lunch. If we have caught nothing else, we have secured a good appetite. Isn't this enjoyable? How many a pale-faced townsman, shop-walker, lawyer, clerk, or factory-worker would give much for a day amid such scenes as these. Do you note the sheep yonder on the crest of the hill, as they come into view one by one, appearing in clear outline, a moment against the sky, and then pass out of view? And there's a hawk, poised high up above the heathery moor. Let us dip our horn cup in this noisy runnel. Ah, pure and cool it is.

"Give me a draught from the crystal spring,
When the summer sun is high."

Thank God for good water! I'm a teetotaler by nature, and enjoy it. But now, before we proceed

to business, I am going to read you extracts from two letters sent by my brother, who lives in the Midlands—a good man and a good fisherman, though I say it. He haunts the Trent and the Dove :—“ In playing a dace in a swift stream a pike took it slap under willow roots, float and all. I drew him out with the dace in his mouth into the stream again—a fine golden fish of 4 lb. or 5 lb—but he took me under again, and coming out the second time my dace gave way, and I saw no more of the pike. But it was a marvel, with my fine drawn gut, that he did not smash me in such a stream. The poor dace—a big one—was a pitiful sight.

The week after he wrote this :—“ My friend S—— left us on Tuesday, and went to the place where that pike took my dace, and he returned in a couple of hours with the pike in his basket. As soon as he threw his bait along by the bushes out rushed the pike and grabbed the spinner, and missed it no less than three times. Then it got it fair, and took the whole concern under the willow roots. S—— said he poked about with his gaff till he could see his fish, and then made a desperate dig for it, and brought it through everything to the bank—a fish of $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. It was a pretty sight at evening to see a water rat that our fishing had disturbed cross the river thrice, each time with a young one in its mouth, depositing them for safety by a tree root on the farther shore.”

But let us look at our flies to see that all is in order, and try once more. You go up this stream to

the right, where there are some deep pools among the rocks, and I will try in the smoother water below the bridge. We meet by-and-bye with the question : “Have you done anything?” “Nothing.” “Nor have I, except a little sprat or two, which I put back to gain more sense.”

So we give over, put our rods together, and, with light baskets, but with cheerful spirits, journey homeward. We had one good laugh over the story told by the secretary of a Midland club of what took place last Bank Holiday. It seems a goodly party of anglers went out for the day and fished, some with more and some with less success. When the day's business was over one man begged from the others the fish they had taken—thirty-five in all. These were placed in his basket to take home to his family. On their way home the party called at a public-house, near the railway station, and had some drink. It was there that the wag of the party removed the fish from the man's basket and put in their place a tumbler and a large piece of brisk. The fishermen parted from each other in the street, and the man with the basket, entering his home, called out, “Bring a dish !” The dish was brought, the basket opened, and ——

The rest of the story remains untold, for it was lost in the laughter the secretary's voice evoked in the train.

So fishermen talk and enjoy the change of air and scene, even when the fish will not be lured by the fly. And who that works honestly when at work is

not the better when the right time comes for a little play?

“ Now the bright crocus flames, and now
The slim narcissus takes the rain,
And, straying o'er the mountain's brow,
The daffodilies bud again,
The thousand blossoms wax and wane,
On wold and heath, and fragrant bough,
But fairer than the flowers art thou,
Than any growth of hill or plain.”

MELEAGER

Translated by ANDREW LANG

A DAY IN THE MIDLANDS

THE acceptance of such an invitation was a fore-gone conclusion. Several friends were spending a day on the Dove in picturesque Derbyshire, and I had been asked to make one of the party. It was too early for the grayling, but there was roach and dace fishing, with the chance of a barbel ; the water was carefully preserved, so that it contained plenty of fish ; the company was attractive, and the day free from engagement ; the opportunity, therefore, was not to be missed. The day opened promisingly. There were sunshine and cloud alternately, with a soft west wind. We looked up at the sky, and said, "If this is not a good day for fishing, there never was one."

We were not all smokers, but a compartment was well filled with men, rods and baskets, mercy talk, and—smoke. We always get a story in the train as we go a-fishing. The monster pike, "big as a man," was hooked and lost. "What are you laughing at?" was asked after the story. "Only you are anglers, that's all." One of the party had been pike-fishing some time before, and hooked a fish which broke him, carrying off tackle, float, and a good length of line. His brother, coming up the stream later in the day, noticed a float bobbing about, and putting on his pike line managed to get fastened to it, and had the pleasure of playing and landing a 9 lb. fish.

Very similar was the barbel story of an incident which took place at the spot where our day's fishing began. A brother of the angle was working two rods, and had fixed one on the bank, ledgering (Derbyshire, slugging ; Nottinghamshire, plumping), while he went with his light rod higher up the stream. When he came back his rod was gone ! He knew no one could have taken it, and carefully searched up and down stream. Could a fish have run away with his rod, reel, and line ? Presently he climbed into an aged willow, whose massive trunk rose sheer from the water's edge. There in shallow water, near the opposite bank, lay his sunken rod. He called to his friend, who speedily improvised a drag with his pike tackle, and began to angle not for fish, but for fishing gear. At the second throw the line was caught near the butt-end of the rod. Soon its owner had it in hand, and found himself playing a lively barbel. It was safely landed. The fish which accomplished this feat of strength was not large : it only weighed about 3 lb.

We separated in the fields near the water's edge, and each man hastily parted up his rod at his favourite swim. One put in a slug, a second began fly-fishing, while another threw in a handful of maggots, and commenced operations in the swirl of a stream under the afore-named old willow. It is a lovely spot, in the pure country,

"Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife."

The village of Sudbury is about a mile and a half

away, and the Dove here winds a serpentine course among level meadows, dotted with grazing horses, sheep, and cattle. The rapid stream pausing here and there in willow overhung "deeps" makes up for lost time by rattling over gravelly shoals. Masses of yellow tansy, purple loose strife, and blue forget-me-nots line the broken banks, and look which way he will, the fisherman's eye meets agreeable prospects—fertile fields, tall hedges, and, further away, a background of tree-covered hills. "When I would beget content," says Izaak Walton, "and increase confidence in the power and wisdom and providence of Almighty God, I will walk the meadows by some gliding stream, and there contemplate the lilies that take no care, and those very many other little living creatures that are not only created but fed (man knows not how) by the goodness of the God of Nature, and therefore trust in Him." The reader of words like these is ready to think "The Compleat Angler" was first pencilled by Walton in the open air, and by the water's edge, so really do the spirit of the fields and the aroma of flowers pervade his book. The pen hesitates to write that, from the standpoint of fishing, the day was a poor day. When we met at half-past two the report was bad luck all round. We had had bites—only a few of these—but had taken nothing. So we made a fire under the hollow bank, ate our lunch, and sat and chatted and laughed as men will whose minds are free. The lines were put in ledgering, and presently one had a sharp bite, and sang out, "I have him!"

It was an eel, nearly a pound weight. What a mess he made of that landing net, and how hard he was to kill. Eels are horrid things to handle, and some anglers would rather miss them than catch them. A nice picture we made, the four of us in line on that green bank, above the reeds, thistles, and tansy ; our rods laid at rest, each in a forked stick, with the rain now and again pouring upon us. A landing net and three big dace lay together upon the wet grass, the swifts flew untiringly up and down the stream, while each man's eye watched his rod point. "This does not equal fly-fishing," we said. Slugging is a lazy, unsportsmanlike way of fishing. How different would have been the play with these great dace on a fly line ! As they came up, hauled behind the big leaden "slug," it seemed a coarse business altogether. It rained heavily as we waded through the long grass and the broad leaves of the butterbur. There was more talk in the train about plants, evolution, and natural history. Then we straggled in couples from the railway station, said a cheery "Good-night" to each other, and went to our suppers tired, but refreshed in mind with the recreation of a pleasant day.

AN ANGLER'S COMPANIONS

ONE can hardly go a-fishing in the fair open country, which teems everywhere with life, without noting the movements and habits of those "very many other little living creatures" which Izaak Walton tells of in an oft-quoted passage. These, which Francis of Assisi styled his "little brothers," are the angler's companions as he walks to and from his favourite pastime, sits in patient expectancy on the river bank, or rests himself at lunch-time under the shady trees. Insects and birds are everywhere, the grass and river banks are alive with minute organisms (too much for his comfort sometimes, when he unconsciously reposes near an ant's nest !) The surface of the water is dotted with flies innumerable, and the old fallen tree, on which his rod rests, is peopled with nations of singular inhabitants. In fact Nature *lives*, and marvellous is the interest connected with life in any of its forms. It was a wise saying of Thoreau that "To him who contemplates a trait of natural beauty, no harm nor disappointment can come."

I can recall early days when as a schoolboy out fishing I have watched the movements of a stoat on the canal bank, or those of a rat busy cutting the reeds with his sharp teeth. It was worth while going a long way to where in a pool half covered with

weeds, minnows played over the pebbles ; or, more interesting still, the fierce sticklebacks fought among the water lilies. Now and again I was fortunate enough to see a hawk suspending itself over a field, and I paused to watch it. Presently it moved away, repeating the same tremulous hovering. Did it see a mouse or small bird ? By-and-bye it swept down, but rose without touching the earth, having caught nothing ; then stood over another place. Soon it passed too far away for my sight to follow.

At another time, walking among the bushes by a trout stream I came across a heron. A common sight ; but how interested I was as I watched the large-winged bird rise slowly from the brook-side (which was in flood) and sail away. When I returned in an hour's time it was there again, and I noticed how, as it rose, its long neck outstretched, that it seemed all neck and wing. But when it drew in its head, and moved off, it seemed a graceful bird. How this one thing has brightened a dull day ! *The day I saw the heron.*

Every fisherman knows the water rat—a most interesting little creature, with a restless eager eye. Sometimes it starts from under his very feet, and swims past his float to the rushes which skirt the further bank. It is properly named the water vole. One beautiful day in May I watched with much interest one which was feeding by a small pond close to a drain. Its coat was wet, and it was busy eating the fresh green grass as I came up unnoticed. Stand-

ing perfectly motionless, I was able to watch it for several minutes as it continued its meal, keeping its eye on me, however. It used its fore feet nimbly now and again to bring the grass close to its mouth, sometimes biting a grass-blade from the top downwards. In a little time it had cleared the small space on which it stood as neatly as if it had been mown. Its quick restless eyes seemed seemed placed near together on the top of its head, a convenient arrangement when one considers the habits and dangers of the animal ; yet, when it turned, one eye appeared to be set in the side of the head toward me. For the few minutes I stood perfectly still it went on eating, but as I turned my head on hearing a footprint, there was a splash, and it was gone !

Another almost companionable little creature is the wagtail, of which there are several kinds, the yellow and the pied being very common by the water-side. Once I noted one on a stone wall, running quickly along like a bird which had important business on hand. I noticed it pecking right and left, and, examining the wall closely, I found a number of small black flies, evidently newly-hatched, on which the bird was making a meal. At another time two of the same birds came quite near where I stood. One, which I took to be the female, as it was slightly less than the other, came close ; the other kept farther off. Beautiful little creatures ! Their shape, colour, quick movements, keen eyes, and fearlessness are alike attractive. They fed incessantly on small insects, now

and again running with amazing quickness after a fly. Both had black backs and breasts. They must have been building a nest near.

Who has not seen, while out fishing early in the season, what I noticed one day in Cumberland? It was in March, and ploughing operations were going on in the fields. In several places rooks and flocks of white gulls were following close to the moving plough, feeding on the unearthened worms. Black and white birds seemed to agree well together. At one end of a field two white birds were evidently placed as sentinels. But, all being safe, they seemed to have no responsibility, and, not daring to leave their post and join the others, they flew about—exactly as two boys would have done set to watch where there seemed no need to be careful.

One day I observed a little flock of gnats flying above a heap of straw. There were eight or nine of them, flying up and down in a fashion which indicated enjoyment. Now one would fly away from the rest, but soon return, joining, with a quick greeting, another on the way. They seemed to have some regularity or movement as if playing a game. On another occasion, in a pasture not far from the river-side, where I was gathering mushrooms, I lit upon a young hedgehog, quietly feeding among the grass. It was to me an uncommon and interesting picture. After watching its motions for some time from a distance, I went closer, and at once it ceased feeding, but made no attempt to escape. When I touched it

with a stick it rolled itself up like a ball, as the manner of those creatures is. Its size showed it to be quite a young one.

It was on my way down the river that I was one day able to examine a bat which had been picked up by a platelayer on the railway, having probably killed itself by contact with the telegraph wires. I measured its wings, two inches in breadth, while their length when outspread measured nine inches from tip to tip. From the lower part of its body a covering like a curtain took the place of a tail, and to this its legs, down to the small feet, were fastened. Its feet had five slender toes. The body was like that of a mouse, with soft hair on the back and beneath. The wings have three muscles and five ribs ; they are composed of a silky elastic material, semi-transparent and covered with a network of lines like veins. The legs have two muscles, one close to the body, the other, like an elbow, lower down. Its ears are small and rounded, and in each a projection like a tongue, the use of which I cannot discover. It has a square snout, a small mouth with teeth inside, above and below, and round the mouth, hairs like a cat's whiskers. At the second joint of each wing was a horny hook, by which the creature can hang on to a beam. Its wings, when closed, lay close to its body, compactly. What a wonderful piece of mechanism !

As these bits of observation have only a secondary relation to fish and fishing, I will close with a note made after the capture of my first salmon trout :—At

last, after many endeavours, I have caught my first sea trout. They come up the Tyne in September and October, and are caught with worm and fly. It was in a perfect solitude, under some trees, where a brook emptied itself in the river, that I got my fish. It rose twice at my large March brown, and the second time I hooked him. Then followed a fight for five minutes or so, up stream and down, without my getting a sight of him. The stream was strong, and my rod bent nearly to the butt. But I played him, though with excited nerves, and at last threw him on the bank with the gaff. It weighed 1 lb. 12 oz. It was no use my trying to fish any more. I was too excited, and so came home. The fish made a dinner for four of us.

A BROTHER OF THE ANGLE.

HERE is no reason why I should not tell my readers about him, though he is happily not yet numbered with the dead of whom all men speak well. He is "all alive," an active business man in a Midland town, who enjoys his book and pipe, and is, I say without exaggeration, as fond of his rod and riverside as any man I know. If I speak warmly of his good qualities, it will be enough excuse to say that we have known each other since we were boys, and that I have spent more hours with him—and pleasanter—by the water-side than with any man living. Aye, how we laughed together! What glorious summer days we have spent under blue skies, when the soft wind has made music among the willows, the fish have been leaping, and the small white clouds have made shadows on the clear streams! And what wintry days have seen us angling, with blue faces, chilled hands, and line hard frozen in the rod rings! How easily can I recall memories of our sport amongst the roach, the tench, pike, and

"Bright-eyed perch with fins of Tyrian dye!"

The fires we have made and kept up on cold days on the river banks! The odd places we have lunched in, summer, autumn, and winter! And those weary walks homeward, cheered by fishing stories and merry narrations of all sorts! As I look back over

the years that he and I have been acquainted, no words of mine can tell how much the love of fishing has been to him, as well as to myself.

All good anglers are kind-hearted men, or ought to be ; and such is this brother of the angle. He does good deeds because he cannot help it.

If I were asked what his strong point as an angler is, the question would be open whether it is spinning for pike, or fishing deep for chub, Nottingham fashion, with a thin line, heavily shotted tackle, in a strong stream. He is not much of a fly fisher, however, though his hand tries it sometimes. He is a Christian man, and will forgive me for reproducing a sentence or two from one of his letters.

“ ‘ He hath showed thee, O man, what is good.’ I note this, that though people quarrel and fight over creeds and all that, and have done from the apostles downwards, there is never any falling out with righteousness and love. I sometimes think (under correction) that there is a great deal too much church and chapel religion—one’s religious life seems to hang round the building, instead of our standing out before the world as witnesses of righteousness, and loving our neighbour as one’s self. I think we should delight in God’s law—it is such a right thing—and should make it the business of life to do good, as business men aim at making money.”

Now that is a bit of religion which every right-minded man will agree with.

But this is preliminary talk. I want to make a

quotation or two from his letters. I am sure my readers will recognise in his words the true descriptive power.

“ I saw a good thing on Saturday afternoon when I had gone to the Trent-side for an hour’s spinning. Three men came on the bank with two fox terriers, and they kept breaking the ice-pools left by the flood, in the hope of finding a pike which had been left when the water fell. Coming to a rail which slanted down into the Trent, as these old fences do, and which was half covered with the rubbish brought down during the rise, here they started a poor rat, which dodged men and dogs as long as it could, and then took to the swollen river in the hope of crossing to the other side. As the Trent was more than a hundred yards wide at the place, it had no chance of getting across, but, glad to escape from the hullabolu of shouts, barks, and shower of sticks and stones, it set off on its perilous voyage. It had got some fifty yards out, when a great crooked stake came hurling through the air, and fell right on it, as I thought. But, no ; when the splash came it dodged under, and the next moment was sitting on the piece of wood, and sailing away down the swift stream out of reach of its persecutors. ‘Sweet are the uses of adversity,’ said I to myself.

And this is how the rat story ended. Half a mile from the place where it took to the water, the trend of the stream at a mighty curve brought the poor little mariner nearer and nearer the bank, till the men who

had followed it field after field (you could hear the double gates on the hauling path jar to as in the olden days), dislodged it at last, and they soon had it with their ever-ready dog. This I was told last Monday by one of the men who was strolling down the river-side. But notice this. Was it retribution? A week after they were out again with the same dog, when a water-hen scuttered across the broad piece of ice, with the dog after it before the men could call it back. The fowl dived into the stream off the edge of the ice, the dog after it; and the next minute the latter was struggling to regain the ice. But no; there was no getting back over that sharp, thin edge; and so the men watched and shouted till the end came, and their much-prized dog fell back into the stream and sank. 'But it was half-an-hour before she'd give in, sir.'"

So ends the tragic history of a poor water vole, and its born enemy, the fox terrier.

Sometimes his letters give a glimpse of a fisherman's unlikely days. "I took advantage of the fine day to go off to the Sutton stream yesterday. We had a good dinner at the pub. Mem.: this always pays. You can do with a double feed when you are all day in the open air, and 'prayer and provender hinder no man,' however much he wants to get back to his fishing. I went with hardly a hope to fish, the rain having been so unusually heavy, but though the brook was thick and yellow, it had gone down at least a foot from the level meadow; so we fished, and after dinner I knocked over seven big dace in one swim. I got

nine in all, and a nice little catch considering the lowness of one's hopes in the morning."

Here is another little bit—an angler's sketch on notebook paper:—"We spent a day at Weston Cliff, a beautiful place, but the fishing very slow, as pike fishing always is unless they run. We had never a touch the live-long day, though I pegged away with my spinning-rod, with an eye on the big cork float at the same time. But it was a treat to stand in the meadow, with the steep wooded bank facing you across the narrow pool, and to watch some seven or eight kingfishers, which, fearlessly enough, skimmed the pond from end to end, alighting now and then on a bush, to go whack into the water again, after the little fish, which, in their turn, were disporting themselves in all directions."

Who does not enjoy a bit of fun? Who is not the better for it? And who so likely to find it as two merry anglers on the water's edge? Even in wintry days the fun bubbles over at times.

"Yesterday my friend H—— and I went to Sutton in about as bitter a freezing gale as I have ever known. It had been a wet night, but with the sun came the frost, hardening to ice the shady side of the lane, while all was glistening wet along the sunny side. Fishing? well, I did put my rod together, but after a few swims down had to run for it—to get a bit of warmth. But it was very enjoyable. The Derbyshire people say of a keen wind, 'It blows very *thin* this morning!' How I laughed to be sure. My friend

H—— is a bit of a grumbler, and if the fish don't happen to bite, he rather lays it on to his companion that we have not gone somewhere else. Here is a brook-side incident for you. We run before the wind across the first meadow, our garments half a yard ahead of us, then scramble over a fence, and jump the ditch, and scud across the second field, over another hedge, and under the lee of a bit closer-grown bush we put our rods together. Then we tack to the brook-side, and manage to get our floats down to the water. 'I told you so; it's just what I expected,' and I turn to see H—— bareheaded, his nice black hat scudding down the yellow stream, and making fast for the opposite side. 'Run,' I say, 'as hard as you can down to the plank, and I'll keep my eye on it.' He ran, and I'm afraid I laughed. But when he returned with his dripping hat (it was pretty near half a mile going round and back), and had tied it fast to his button hole with a bit of line, in a couple of minutes 'There you are again,' and I saw the same good hat following my float along the dancing waves. It was of no use; I roared, though I kept it in desperately, till after many a vain scoop, the hat was landed once more on to the frosty grass. But we had an enjoyable day. You know what a fine walk it is to Sutton, with such a nice quiet English country left and right of the road."

I will bring this chapter to a close with some rememberable lines, copied by this good fisherman in one of his letters:—

“ Think every morning when the sun peeps through
The dim leaf-latticed windows of the grove,
How jubilant the happy birds renew
Their old melodious madrigals of love !
And when you think of this, remember, too,
‘Tis always morning somewhere, and above
The awakening continents, from shore to shore,
Somewhere the birds are singing evermore.”

A MEMORABLE DAY.

EVERY angler has days on which he looks back with pleasure and pride, days when all things were favourable and success went beyond his expectations. He never forgets them ; they stand out luminously in memory, and will be talked of as long as, or longer than, his hands can hold a rod. Eighteen years ago, next November, I had the greatest catch in my life, and I am happily able, from a record hastily written at the time, to preserve its details in perpetual remembrance. It was the day on which I landed the big pike, a fish which for many years stood in its glass case, an object of wonder to those who visited the house. My good friend Mr. G—— of Wolverhampton, was master of an art school, and had for his patron the excellent Lord Dartmouth. One Monday morning my friend called with a permission from his lordship for himself and a friend to fish in the lake at Patsull. We had been there before, but it was in the summer, when pike-fishing was not at its best. The offer was gladly accepted ; tackle got ready ; our pike rod—Nottingham make, and bought years before of an old Hoveringham fisherman—taken down and dusted ; two or three dozen baits bought, and early on Tuesday morning we were moving through the silent streets with the stars overhead ; while here and there a workman, basket on back, was moving to his toil. We were soon in the

train, and saw through the window the slowly increasing evidence of daydawn. We got off at a village station, gave the baits a dash of fresh water at the tap, and began our three miles walk toward the scene of the day's sport. There had been a good drop of rain the night before, and the lanes were slushy, but overhead there were not wanting indications that the day was to be fine. The time passed pleasantly as we walked—one always feels good humoured and cheery going to fish. The lodge gate was passed, and we went across the park, noting the big elms, the soft turf, and the great house and outbuildings among the trees. Then the sun rose—a splendid sight. Soon we caught a glimpse of the shining water and felt as “happy as kings” as we stepped on more briskly onwards it. What a picture we had at one point as we touched the border of the lake! The sun was half visible above a wooded hill beyond the glassy pool, the spire of a village church appearing in the trees. The ‘shine’ was on the water, and a wild fowl we had started was swimming to the other side, leaving an angle of ripples of which its body was the point. We closed our eyes to reproduce that picture, looked at it again, and memory has stored it away.

But we have reached the bridge, and there lies the broad sheet of water, with some small fry of dace here and there making rings on its surface. No time is lost in “parting up.” Now for a bait; we throw in, and the cork is bobbing about here and there. Perhaps a quarter of an hour has passed, and the rod

has been laid at rest, when down goes the float ! Did our heart beat quicker ? Yes, and a trifle faster when we had struck and felt the tug of the fish. There ! away he goes ! "Keep hold of him tight" ; "yes ; bring that net." Now we lean over and gently draw him into shallow water—the net at his tail, he is in it now—a captive past escaping. Not a large fish, four to five pounds perhaps, and in lovely condition. Now for another throw in. Perhaps half-an-hour passes, then Mr. G—— cries, "I have a run," and his short rod is bending and shaking. An awkward place to land a fish over the stonework by the bridge ; but we lean over, get the net well under, and number two is ashore, similar in size and weight to his companion in the other basket. Another half-hour or so and no more runs. We begin to feel the interest lag just slightly, and open the daily paper to see how the Eastern Question goes on. "You have a run," calls our friend, and a third is landed. The wind is rising now, and hope springs with it. The water bailiff comes with his boat, and we put our traps aboard and row to another part of the water. We land, get a run, by a big hawthorn, and, striking too quickly, miss our fish. Try him again ? Yes ; but he'll not look at the bait, and we move further down among the trees. Here is a gigantic beech, a few yards up the bank ; others are down by the lake's edge, and throw their branches over the water. We come to an open space, and throw in. The bait is a small roach, not three inches in length. Little did we think what that small

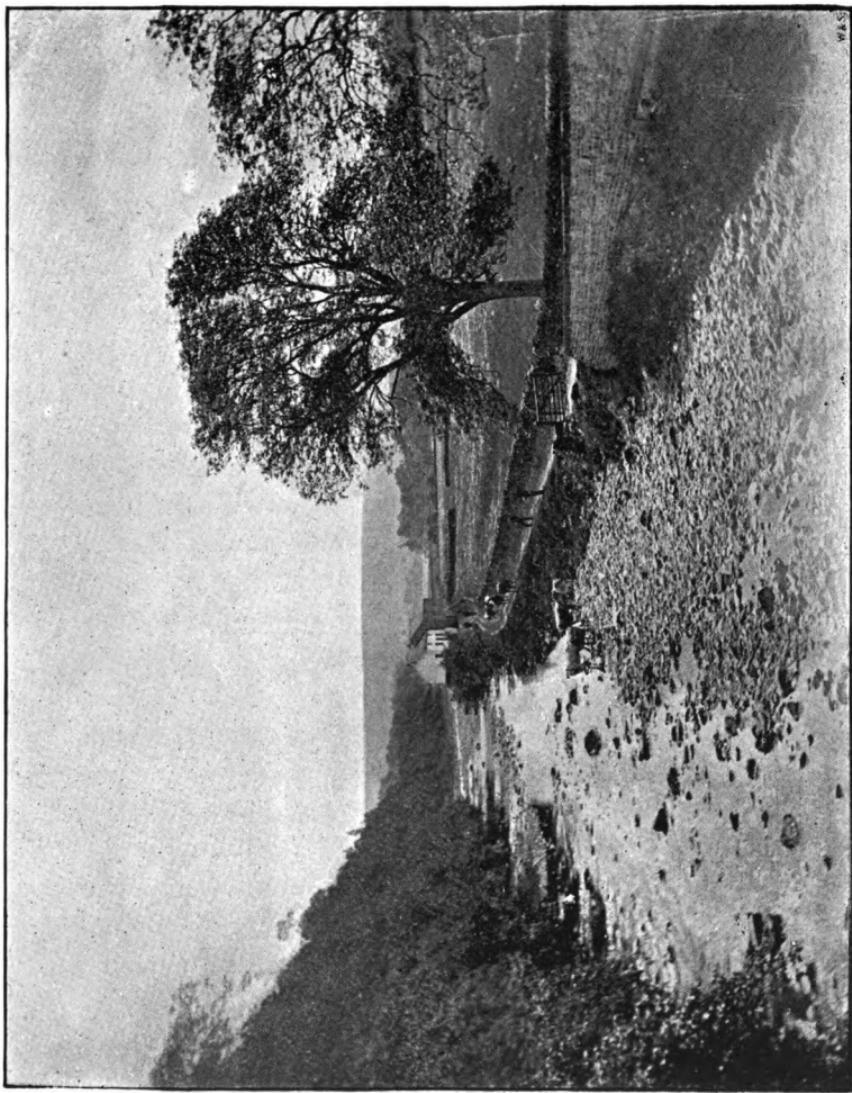
fish would bring ! The rod has not been laid down a minute when the float swipes slantwise under water and away. We whistle for our friend, and wait. As he comes up we tighten the line and strike. Then follows a pull ! Away he goes ! We bring him to, with head towards us, but not a sight of him can we get. (Nothing like these big wooden reels at such a time.) Again and again he comes and goes, till at length he shows his side. What a fish ! The water swirled round in a way to make one quite nervous as he struck off once more. We move a little downward towards a place handy for landing. O, if he were but on the bank ! We bring him closer, and he dashes bang into the weeds. Pulling is no use. He won't move a jot. Sulky. "What shall we do ? I shall never get him out, I fear. O, bring that drag." And our good friend throws the hooks right over where the fish has stuck himself. "He's off again !" A few more turns and he comes up, the fight all out of him now. The net is no use, he's too big for it ; so our friend, not without risk, puts his finger in the gill and heaves him on the bank. Hurrah ! Twelve pounds if an ounce, and in lovely condition. What a back, what jaws and teeth ! We give him a tremendous kick behind his head, and draw the bag over him. The day's work seems done now. Our friend takes another, and we bag a good perch. Then along the road to meet the trap. What a weight to carry ! We are glad when the man drives up, and we start homeward. Before tea we go up to a shop to have the big

fish weighed. Why, he is alive yet! There, put him in the scales. Sixteen pounds, good. We must take his measure also. Forty-two inches—six beyond a yard long. Now for a good tea, and enjoyable restful evening, and a story to tell the youngsters of our memorable day's fishing.

THE LAST DAY OF THE SEASON.

THE close season for trout in the part of Cumberland in which I reside begins all too early. From April to September 10th is a short term for a year's angling. We are unanimous in the opinion that the period might with advantage be lengthened till the 1st of October. However, anglers, like other men, will do well to take the sensible advice of Epictetus the Stoic, and choose things to be as they happen, and not as we want them. A word to the wise is enough.

On Saturday, September 9th, two friends, a parson and a schoolmaster, took advantage of the fine cloudy day, and set off, rod in hand, determined to explore the Gilderdale Burn, which here divides the counties of Cumberland and Northumberland. We set off in high spirits about eleven in the forenoon, our bags well provisioned, flies round our hats, and a cheerful hope in our minds. "Wish us good luck, lady fair," we said to the bright young wife who stood on the door-step for a last look at her other half. She did, and away we went, eager for the fray. It was an exhilarating morning; our feet moved willingly, and before we were half-a-mile on the road, it became necessary for the older man to pull up and say, "We are going too fast." How well an angler of sanguine temperament can understand the feeling! The



ON THE SOUTH TYNE.

mental desire to be at work moved too quickly the physical machinery. We chatted merrily till we reached the old bridge at which operations were to begin. The friendly young policeman, who was on duty in the road, wished us good luck, and a glance at the stream below showed the water to be in fine condition, just enough of it, and nicely coloured with the moorland peat. We parted for a while, one going in advance to work downward, while his friend fished up-stream till they met.

It is a lovely spot. The pure country, with not a house in sight. One could not but think as we looked up the Burn as it forced its rapid course among the rocks, how much some of our brothers of the angle whose residence is, as ours used to be, dingy street of a manufacturing town, would give to dwell within two miles of a scene like this? Who was it said, "God made the country, man made the town?" There was not wanting, either, a sense of indebtedness to the gentleman through whose favour the pleasure was ours to fish on his estate.

Con'ser

We worked our way up a deep winding dale whose cleavage divides high heathery fells, where the grouse abound (or did, before the sportsmen came), and where, in perfect solitude, a man feels, rather than expresses, the communion he has with nature. The stream itself has perpetual freshness, as indeed all running waters have. Here it brawls between masses of limestone; there it spreads out in shallows, while yonder it forms a miniature Niagara, as it flings itself,

a white foaming mass, over a small precipice. Its course is not alike for six yards anywhere, and at one place, the picture of which is photographed on our memory, it leaps from one terrace of limestone to another, leaving convenient pools where, later on, the salmon will lodge on their way to the beds in which they spawn. Out of one of these pools, just on the edge of the latter, we took three trout in rapid succession, besides missing others. The water was just right, all atmospheric conditions favourable; yet, at lunch time, we had only taken a few fish; nor were they over large. Now and again we hooked one of fair size, and the landing net came into use. When men say, "I have not patience to fish," they speak in ignorance. The mere killing of so many is not the true angler's aim. His angling is the central point of numerous pure pleasures. All nature speaks to the tranquil-minded fisher as he plies his craft amid such scenes as these.

" The hills and mountains raised from the plains,
The plains extended level with the ground ;
The grounds divided into sundry veins,
The veins enclosed with rivers running round,
These rivers making way through nature's chains,
With headlong course into the sea profound ;
The raging sea, beneath the valleys low,
Where lakes and rills and rivulets do flow.

All these, and many more of His creation
That made the heavens, the angler oft doth see ;
Taking herein no little delectation,
To think how strange, how wonderful they be !
Framing thereof an inward contemplation,
To set his heart from other fancies free ;
And whilst he looks on these with joyful eye,
His mind is rapt above the starry sky."

We fished our way up, higher and higher, so completely shut in that only the brown slopes of the fells, with an occasional sheep or two, were visible below the blue sky, across which masses of cloud slowly moved. Here and there a smaller burn ran noisily to join ours, and from one of these a heron rose, and sailed gracefully between us and the sky. It is a pity to shoot the heron. Of little value for the table, it is a picturesque addition to the landscape, and its numbers are becoming less year by year. One of us tried the bait—maggot and worm—but with no better success. The fish were not taking well. At the out-flow of a burn we parted for awhile, to meet at the waterfall higher up. A cast was made from a high bank over a likely place, and a good fish rose to the fly, its whole action visible. It was hooked, and had to be cautiously lifted a dozen feet before it was secured. A good hole lay below the noisy fall; but, though a fish or two rose to the fly, results were *nil*. “We failed to connect”—as they say in Texas. A remarkable cave was now reached—“Tutman’s hole,” a fissure in the limestone rocks which adventurous men have, it is said, explored for half-a-mile or more. We enter a little way, gather some spleen-wort, drink of the pure cold water which issues from the cave mouth, and decide to fish for another half hour, and then make for home. In a deep hole under beetling rocks a good trout rose, and made fine play till the net, deftly placed beneath, made him a captive past escaping. But the stream

was becoming smaller, day was declining, and we were tired.

So we paused at a small foot-bridge, "parted up" our rods, and started homeward over the fell. O, but our limbs did ache ! Now and again our feet sank in the moist peat, but after an hour's stiff walking, enlivened by friendly chat, we reached our homes in time for a most welcome tea. We had been out six pleasant hours, and our basket contained eighteen trout. The last day of the season. Farewell, little rod, for a time. We must use a stronger implement for the bull trout which come on next, and till their season ends also, may we, and all good anglers, enjoy our simple pleasures, and meet with good success !

AMONG THE SALMON TROUT.

IT seems scarcely fair to sit down to write of fish you cannot catch ; but many readers will know nothing of the bold fish which in these northern parts are of such interest to fishermen from the beginning of autumn, when they run up from the sea, till dull November comes to close the season, and indeed with us, to put an end for five months to fishing altogether. This season has been an especially unfavourable one, and some skilled fishermen have whipped the river day after day with most disappointing results. As I am writing for readers in the Midlands and South of England, let me say that late in the year, when the trout fishing with us in the north is ending, there come up into our rivers what are locally termed the "big fish" ; one of these, which resembles in some respects the common trout, is a yellow-spotted fish ; the other, and best-liked, is of lighter colour, and has affinities with the salmon. Both are sea trout, which come up these rivers to spawn. There is a marked difference in the way they take the fly. The "white fish" seizes your lure under the water, often as it sinks near a stone. There is no "rise," the first indication that your fly is taken being the pull as your line runs off with amazing rapidity, and yourself, if an impulsive man, careering down-stream over boulders and into pools. They hook themselves, and bring the blood

into your face with their strong play. The bull trout, on the contrary, makes a distinct "rise," not unfrequently leaping up twice or thrice before he is hooked. I have seen the bent form of a fine fish above the water, and have been surprised when I had him on at his size and strength. When he feels the hook he moves off determinedly, and shows good fighting powers ere he lies submissive in the landing net. They take the fly best in the evening, and men who can fish till dark usually do best. We use a large fly, and the fish prefer one with a silver body. Here in Cumberland we do not ask a brother angler if he has taken any fish, or "done anything"; the invariable phrase is, "Have you *seen* any fish?" It is noticed by some that if a hooked fish works up stream, he is insecurely held, whereas if he shoots right away seaward the hook is probably fast in his jaw. How I laughed one day after a fish had thus started back for the sea, at the remembrance of a lad who was stealing apples. The owner of the orchard stood watching, and, seeing the urchin creeping through the fence, called out, "Now, boy, where are you going?" "I am going back, sir," was the answer in pitiful tones. I said to the hooked fish, as it sped downward, "Now, then, where are you going?" and it seemed to reply, "I am going back." But that fish never more reached the sea.

Now what are these sea trout? The question is by no means settled as to whether they are a distinct species, or only a variety. Mr. Buckland says:—"It

has been supposed by some that the sea trout and the bull trout are identical. I know the bull trout very well indeed, and could pick him out among a thousand kinds of *Salmonidæ*. I am certain, therefore, that there is a difference between the ordinary sea trout and the bull trout. Mr. Dunbar, in a letter to me, says, 'They are certainly a distinct species ; they go by themselves, and breed by themselves.'* There is always a great "if" in the way when evolution is spoken of, for, in the language of Professor Sir Wyville Thompson, "There is not a shadow of evidence of one species having passed into another during the period of human record or tradition." But the evolutionists are very confident, and Mr. Grant Allen gives the whole process of the development of a salmon from the common trout. *If* this be true, the unlearned observer may ask whether these varieties are not examples of the ascent from simple trout to lordly salmon ? Certainly they have some characteristics of both. But let us hear Mr. Grant Allen :— "Even the salmon himself is only a river trout who has acquired the habit of going down to the sea, where he gets immensely increased quantities of food (for all the trout kind are almost omnivorous), and grows big in proportion. But he still retains many marks of his early existence as a river fish. In the first place, every salmon is hatched from the egg in fresh water, and grows up a mere trout. . . . The ancestral fish, only a hundredth fraction in weight of

* "Houghton's British Fresh Water Fishes," p. 110.

his huge descendant, must have somehow acquired the habit of going seaward—possibly from a drying-up of his native stream in seasons of drought. In the sea, he found himself suddenly supplied with an unwonted store of food, and grew, like all his kind under similar circumstances, to an extraordinary size. Thus he attains, as it were, to a second and final maturity."† But this is mere speculation. To some it will be more interesting to hear the account of one fish being caught than to discuss questions as to genus and species. So here is the story:—

I had grown tired of throwing the long cast with my salmon-trout flies, and so for a change put on my fine gut with black gnat and purple-bodied blos. There was a nice water, and I soon had a couple of brace, the first fish being taken from the opposite bank right under a rocky ledge. It is surprising how the capture of a few fish warms the angler to his work. I still fished up stream, trying all the likely places; and thus stepped on to a rock to get a cast over a little slack near the opposite bank, when I had a rise, and knew in three seconds that I was into a big fish. Shall it be confessed that my heart beat quicker? for my gut was well used, and not over strong. It had broken twice in my hand not long before. After the initial plunge, my fish came nearer into the strong current, yet without showing himself, and, turning, took down stream apace. He had to go just where he liked and as fast as he liked; nor was there any choice

†"The Evolutionist at Large," by Grant Allen.

but to follow him, landing net in one hand, rod tightly grasped in the other, almost at a run, over the big stones. The river bed is full of huge lumps of rock, round which the water swirls, leaving a quiet pool just above. The fish rested himself in each of these, and then took another downward run. At length I said, as he paused in a convenient place, "Here you shall stay." In that pool the battle was fought out. Now he set off as though he would break everything, and the next minute would settle himself at the bottom in the deepest place, as though fixed to a stone. When he turned over after one of his lunges, I knew the struggle was ending, and, drawing him gently nearer, the net was slipped underneath, and he was drawn up among the big stones. What a sense of relief! Every angler knows the delightful commingling of agreeable sensation when a good fish is landed. Out came the horn cup, and a good draught of the clear water refreshed the captor's spirits. Does the reader smile? "What, nothing stronger?" No, brother of the angle. For many years I have proved how well fresh air, water drinking, and a cheerful spirit keep good company.

Some of these notes of "Angling Days" are pencilled in the open air. Let me copy what will show that the fisherman's unsuccessful days are happy days:—

This is the finest day we have had for weeks. The sunshine has drawn me from my books into these fair fields, where the ripple of the stream is heard,

and where elm, ash, and hazel bend down to the very water's edge. I never tire of the river's song. Where I sit, on a limestone block, the stream ripples over the stones before it broadens into a still pool, over which gnats dance in the sunbeams, while sudden circles move the surface as small trout rise. They are safe for another season anyway ; for we are now far on in September, and the changing colour of the trees, as well as the cooler air, indicate the departure of summer. There ! the sudden splash of a fish close to my feet made me start. Only a trout ; they are no attraction to-day. But the "hush" water is coming on, to give a little colour to the stream. It may be worth while to begin. Ah, it is no use. Let me climb this winding path through the wood above the "scar," and follow the green lane till it meets the river again. How beautiful is this country road ! On either side a breadth of green herbage, where the deep purple of the "hardheads" contrasts finely with the bright gold of the ragwort. All the early flowers are gone, but just enough beauty remains to fill the heart with silent gladness. On the banks the wild strawberry gleams in the grass, the deep tints of the blue harebell shows, and there is a white butterfly, one of the last of the year. A man feels himself a better man for moving among such scenes as these.

But here is the river inviting another cast of the flies. Hours have passed, and every likely place has been tried, but in vain. There is, however, the

dismal consolation that if I failed it has been in company with better hands at the craft.

So much, then, for the uncaught salmon trout. Let them go up to the little burns and spawn in peace while the close season lasts. They and their progeny will visit us again, and again will the patient angler, on fine or cloudy days, seek to lure them with his tempting flies.

STORIES BY A MASTER HAND.

WHAT we say of William Black may be said of every novelist who produces many books—that there is one line in which he is especially strong. His special *forte* is the descriptive. With what intense pleasure we read “The Strange Adventures of a Phæton,” familiar as we were with the road his party travel, *via* Preston and the Fylde country, to Lancaster. A request for permission to quote the following brought a most kindly letter from the author himself, who has the fraternal spirit of the true angler. His works are pleasant reading, and in their spirit pure as a moorland burn. They are books for summer days. The following is from “Shandon Bells.” His hero, Fitzgerald, a literary man, is spending a holiday at an Irish country house called “The Boat of Garry” :—

“ He threw down the book ; and went out and put on his shooting boots and leggings and waterproof. Then he got out the fishing-rod he had brought with him, and jointed together on the lawn. Then he got his fly-book, and chose indifferently the first cast that came to hand, which he twisted round his hat. Thus equipped he set forth through the shrubbery, and made his way to the side of the small but rapid stream that came down from the hills through the valley to the salt water of the bay. He had not stayed to ask what chances of sport there were. But

the throwing of a fly would be sufficient occupation, he thought ; one could not stay indoors the whole afternoon ; besides, there would be practice—in case he might happen on some better fishing elsewhere. So he made his way through the rank, tall grass and herbage (the best shooting boots in the world could not keep out the wet) until he reached the side of the stream, and there he put on the cast, and with a short line threw the flies on the swirling water. It very soon appeared that if he only wanted to exercise his skill he would have ample opportunities, for the streamlet was narrow ; long weeds grew down to the very edge ; the water was rapid, and in the first three casts he got twice caught up. But when he had chosen his position better, and was a little more careful, he soon found himself catching fish—that is to say, small brown trout of about four to the pound. It amused him, and did no harm to them ; nay, perhaps it was a benefit to them, for when they were flung in again they had learned a lesson in life, and would be more cautious in the future. And to him there was a certain variety in the occupation besides merely trying to dodge the tall weeds. To get at some of the pools and reaches of this sharply-curving river he had to cross necks of land that were obviously covered at very high tides with the sea water ; and as these contained a considerable number of deep, peaty-looking holes partially concealed by the long grass, there was a possibility of his finding himself any moment up to the neck in mud. So he kept on—on

this sad, dull day, with the soft rain continuously falling ; discovering new pools, hanging up on weeds, landing small fish, and leisurely throwing them back again, until—yes, until there was a sound that made his heart jump—the shrill whirr-r-r-r of the reel ! Up went the top of the rod, out went the butt, in a moment ! Then he saw his opportunity—he floundered down through the bushes, and got into one of the shallow reaches of the river, where the water was not up to his knees ; here he could deal with his enemy face to face. The fish had at first banged away down stream, but was now skulking under a bank, so he cautiously waded and waded, winding in his line the while, and keeping as heavy a strain on as he dared. If this was a grilse or sea trout making its first experiment into fresh water, he knew very well that it was as likely as not to resent this treatment and make a bolt back for the sea. And now there came between him and his prey a bend of the river where the banks came close together, and he was afraid it was too deep for him to wade. The fearful uncertainty of that moment ! Look at the danger of getting on either bank—scrambling up among the tall weeds—if the fish should just choose that precious point of time. Suddenly there was a slackening of the line, and for a wild second he saw a blue-and white thing flashing in the air and splashing down again on the water. He dipped his rod. Quickly and sharply raising it, he felt no harm had been done. But now the line was appreciably slackening again, and as he

rapidly wound it in, he found that the fish was heading upstream and must be approaching him. This was a serious situation. At last the rod was nearly vertical, though he was winding as hard as he could to get the strain on again, and he was anxiously looking at the point. Just at the instant of his greatest endeavour he joyfully felt the strain returning—nay he had to release his grip of the handle of the reel—he merely kept his fore-finger on the line, ready for any emergency, and then with another great whirr-r-r, away went the fish again, round a turn in the bank, and the next thing he knew was that his rod was quite limp and vertical in his hand, with the line, minus the cast, flying high and idly in the air. So far from disheartening him, however, this put a new aspect on affairs altogether, and he thought that the best thing he could do, before risking any further and similar losses, was to go straight away home and sit down and thoroughly overhaul his fly-book, and see that his casting-lines were in good condition.” Any one will say that none but a fisherman could have written that. It is evidently a bit of personal experience wrought with the story.

With the kindness of a true angler, Mr. Black has himself indicated and given permission to use a passage or two from another of his books, “The New Prince Fortunatus.” This time we are taken to Scotland, and find ourselves in August in the midst of pleasant company. How we enjoy the talk of the

ladies, Lord Rockminster, Lionel and Captain Waveney ! But that Free Church minister who drank whiskey and was long at prayers ! Well, we wish he were away from the house, that is all. It seems almost too bad to quote from the same author two sketches, in each of which the salmon escapes, but we select paragraphs which exhibit Mr. Black's power of description.

First let us enjoy this exquisite bit of scenery. "It was a bright and sweet-aired afternoon ; he was glad to be at the end of his journey ; and this was a very charming, if somewhat lonely, stretch of country in which he now found himself. The wide river, the steep hillside beyond hanging in foliage, the valley narrowing in among rocks and then leading away up to those far solitudes of moorland and heather broken only here and there by a single pine. All these features of the landscape seemed so clear and fine in colour ; there was no intervening haze ; everything was vivid and singularly distinct, and yet aërial and harmonious and retiring of hue. But of course it was the stream—with its glancing lights, its living change and motion, its murmuring, varying voice—that was the chief attraction ; and he wandered on by the side of it, noting here and there the long rippling shallows where the sun struck golden on the sand beneath, watching the oily swirls of the deep black-brown pools as if at any moment he expected to see a salmon leap into the air, and not even uninterested in the calm eddies on the other side, where the smooth water

mirrored the yellow green bank and the bushes and the hanging birch-trees. He sat down for a while, listening absently to this continuous soothing murmur, perhaps thinking of the roar of the great city he had left. He was quite content to be alone ; he did not even want Maurice Magnam to be discoursing with him—in those seasons of calm in which questions, long unanswered, perhaps never to be answered, will arise."

And now for the sketch of the lady angler, who "made the backward cast by throwing both arms right up in the air, so that, as she paused to let the line straighten out behind, her one hand was on a level with her forehead, and the other more than a foot above that." She had played a big salmon for some time. "I think we are getting the better of him, Robert," said she, presently, as the fish began to steer a little in her direction.

"I would step back a bit, Miss Honnor," the keen-visaged old gillie said ; but he did not step back ; on the contrary, he crouched down by the side of a big boulder, close to the water, and again he tried his gaff, to make sure that the steel clip was firmly fixed in the handle. Yes, there was no doubt that the salmon was beaten. He kept coming nearer and nearer to the land, led by the gentle continuous strain of the pliant top ; though ever and anon he would vainly try to head away again into deep water. It was a beautiful thing to look at : this huge gleaming creature taken captive by an almost invisible line, and

gradually yielding to inevitable fate. Joy was in Lionel's heart. If he had wondered that any one, for the sake of amusement, should choose to undergo such agonies of anxiety, he wondered no more. Here was the fierce delight of triumph. The struggle of force against skill was about over ; there was no more tugging now ; there were no more frantic rushes, or bewildering leaps in the air. Slowly, slowly the great fish was being led in to shore. Twice had old Robert warily stretched out his gaff, only to find that the prize was not yet within his reach. And then, just as the young lady with the firm-set lips said, "Now, Robert !" and just as the gaff was cautiously extended for the third time, the salmon gave a final lurch forward, and the next instant—before Lionel could tell what had happened—the fly was dangling helplessly in the air, and the fish was gone.

"*Au Yea !*" said Robert in an undertone to himself ; while Lionel, as soon as he perceived the extent of the catastrophe, felt as though some black horror had fallen over the world. He could not say a word : he seemed yearning to have the fish for one second again where he had lately seen it—and then wouldn't he have gladly jumped into the stream gaff in hand, to secure the splendid trophy ! But now—now there was nothing but emptiness, and a lifeless waste of hurrying water.

And as regards the young lady ? Well, she smiled—in a disconcerted way to be sure ; and then she said, with apparent resignation, "I almost expected

it. I never do hope to get a tugging salmon ; all the way through I was saying to myself we shouldn't land him. However, there's no use fretting over lost fish. We did our best, Robert, didn't we ? "

MORE FISHING STORIES.

ONE of our newest and strongest story-tellers is Ian MacLaren, whose book, "Beside the Bonny Briar Bush," can draw laughter and tears. It is worth while learning Scotch to enjoy his pages. Here is a sketch, for the reproduction of which a kindly permission has been given, and which needs a man from far North Britain to read aloud :—

The two old men are sitting together by the fire, talking over old times, as memories of the past rise one by one. They are named respectively Dr. Maclure and Drumsheugh.

"Hoo lang is't sin ye guddled for troot, Weelum?"

"Saxty year or sae; div ye mind yon hole in the Sheuchie burn, whar it comes doon frae the muir? They used to lie and feed in the rin o' the water."

"A' wes passin' that wy laist hairst, an' a took a thocht and gied ower tae the bank. The oak looks juist the same, an' a' keekit through, an' if there wesna troot ablow the big stane. If a' hedna been sae stiff a' wud hae gien doon and tried ma luck again."

"A' ken the hole fine, Weelum," burst out Drumsheugh; "div ye mind where a' catchit yon twa-punder in the dry simmer? It wes the biggest ever taen oot o' the Sheuchie; a' telt ye a' next day at schule."

"Ye did that, an' ye blew aboot that troot for the hale winter, but nane o's ever saw't, an' it wes juist a

bare half pund tae begin wi' ; it's been growin' a' doot it'll be five afore ye're dune wi't, Drum."

"Nane o' yir impidence, Weelum. A' weighed it in Luckie Simpson's shop as a' gied hame, an' it made twa pund as sure as a'm sitting here ; but there micht be a wecht left in the scale wi't."

"Fishers are the biggest leears a' ever cam across, and ye've dune yir best the nicht, Drum ; but eh, man, guddlin' wes a graund ploy," and the doctor got excited.

"A' think a'm at it aince mair, wi' ma sleeves up tae ma oxters, lying on ma face, we naethin' but the eyes ower the edge o' the stane, an' slippin' ma hands intae the caller water, an' the rush o' the troot, and grippin' the soople slidderin' body o't an' throwin' ower yir head, wi' the red spots glistening on its white belly ; it wes mighty."

"Aye, Weelum, an' even missin' wes worth while ; tae feel it shoot atween yir hands, an' see it dash doon the burn, makin' a white track in the shallow water, and ower a bit fall and oot o' sicht again in anither hole."

They rested for a minute to revel in the past, and in the fire the two boys saw water running over gravel, and deep cool holes beneath overhanging rocks, and little waterfalls, and birch boughs dipping into the pools, and speckled trout gleaming on the grass.

Maclure's face kindled into mirth, and he turned in his chair.

"Ye're sayin' naethin' o' the day when the burn wes settlin' aifter a spate, and ye cam tae me an' Sandie Baxter an' Netherton's brither, 'Squinty,' an' temptit us tae play the truant, threepin' ye hed seen the troot juist swarmin' in the holes."

"A' tried John Baxter tae," interrupted Drumsheugh, anxious for accuracy since they had begun the story, "though he didna come. But he wudna tell on's for a' that. Hillocks lat it oot at the sicht o' the tawse. 'They're up the Sheuchie aifter the troot,' he roared, an' the verra lassies cried 'clype' (tell tale) at him gaein' hame."

"What a day it wes, Drum; a' can see Sandie's heels in the air when he coupit intae the black hole abune Gormack, an' you pullin' him oot by the seat o' his breeks, an' his Latin reader, 'at hed fa'en oot o' his pocket, sailin' doon the water, an' 'Squinty' aifter it, scrammelin' ower the stanes'; and the doctor laughed aloud.

"Ye've forgot hoo ye sent me in tae beg for a piece frae the gude wife at Gormack, an' she saw the lave o' ye coorin' ahint the dyke, an' gied us a flytin' for playin' truant."

The book from which the following Walton-like dialogue is extracted has inside the cover a bookseller's mark "scarce," and as it was published in "the fifties," I may presume that not many of my readers have seen it. The author modestly conceals his name, but gives his profession; and I can say of his work that it is as worthy of a minister of religion as it is of

a skilled angler—who should, of course, be always a good man. Here is the title:—“Rambles and Recollections of a Fly Fisher, Illustrated; with an Appendix containing ample instructions to the novice, inclusive of fly-making, and a list of really useful flies. By *Clericus.*” The value of the book is greatly enhanced by eight steel plates of fish and river scenery. But now for the water-side dialogue:—

We must premise that the scene is laid on the river Wye, near Ludlow, in Shropshire.

“*Clericus.* Well, you are indeed punctual as clockwork. It is just on the stroke of six, the time we fixed on for our meeting.

“*Old Soldier.* For the like of me, Sir, not to be punctual would be a bad job, considering the school I have been taught in.

“*C.* The water seems a trifle too thick, even for a minnow.*

“*Old S.* All the better for you, Sir, in trolling from the bank. The trout won’t see you, and you need not wade.

“*C.* Where are the minnows?

“*Old S.* Here, Sir, in this tin box; and nice bright little fellows they are.

“*C.* What makes you put them in bran?

“*Old S.* It hardens them, which is a great advantage.

* A good hand will kill trout with a minnow on the brightest day, and in the clearest water; though, of course, stained water is all in favour of the troller.

“C. By the way, I don’t much fancy your trolling tackle. I have been accustomed to see it made with a leaden cap to draw down upon the head of the minnow, which not only sinks it, but in some degree protects it from weeds.

“Old S. I have tried both kinds—the one with a leaden cap you speak of, and that I now use, with a large leaded hook to pass through the body of the minnow, and a small lip hook to keep it in place. I certainly prefer my own, though the other may be the favourite.

“C. Do you see where the water curls round yonder bank, eddying into the shore? If there isn’t a trout at home there, I’ll know the reason why.

“Old S. Stop, Sir; let me look at your minnow. It won’t spin well.

“C. Why not?

“Old S. Because you haven’t curved the tail enough. There, now he’ll do.

“C. Oh! how beautifully he spins. Hulloa, did you see that? I just felt the gentleman, but he bustled off in double quick time.

“Old S. You were too quick for him. When he dashed at you, you gave a nervous-like twitch with your rod, and that saved the trout’s life. It’s no use trying for him again yet, though he may run at you by-and-bye when we return. Now, Sir, try the tail of that stream by the large stone. Many a good trout have I killed in that very spot.

“C. Here you are, and a big fellow too, or I am mistaken.

“*Old S.* Keep his head down the stream if you can, and hold him well in hand. There! cleverly done. He’s not much over half a pound, though.

“*C.* He pulled at first like a pounder. How bright and beautiful are his spots! No better fish in season have I caught this year; and that I suppose made him so strong beyond his size.

“*Old S.* That’s uncommonly likely water; don’t leave it, or you’ll leave some good fish behind you.

“*C.* They don’t come well at me. Just try your hand at them. Well done! You have hooked a monsters. What a plunge he made! Take care he doesn’t break you.

“*Old S.* No fear of that. He’s not a trout after all, but a chub, if I mistake not, and a big one too. He hangs as dead upon the line as if there was a stone upon the end of it. Please, Sir, give us a hand with the landing net, while I will coax him in close to the bank. All right, there he is.

“*C.* Why, what a gigantic brute. To fight so little for his life, too! I protest if the half-pound trout didn’t beat him hollow.

“*Old S.* It’s always the way with these rough fish. They make one tremendous struggle at first, and if they don’t break you then they turn sulky, and soon give in. This fish can’t be short of two pounds and a half, if not more.

“*C.* I should be very sorry to taste him.

“*Old S.* Oh! as for that, I shall most likely sell him at the first farm house I come across. Farmers

ain't so nice as you gentry; and a bit of fish, though a trifle soft and flabby like, is no bad relish.

“ *C.* Surely that's not another of the brutes you've just hooked?

“ *Old S.* No, no, not he! Did you see that? He jumped a yard, at least, out of the water.

“ *C.* What a glorious trout! Give way a little, or he'll break you. There, now he's quieter. What a shake he gave! Poor fellow, your race is well-nigh run. Where's the landing-net?

“ *Old S.* Gently, Sir, gently! He saw you, and now he's off again.*

“ *C.* Just draw him round into this neck of water. There, now we have him. Not much under two pounds, I should say.

“ *Old S.* If anything, he's a trifle over. I wish you had hooked him, though.

“ *C.* Oh, you managed him so beautifully, that if I had a taste for trolling, which I confess our sport this evening has not awakened within me, a better lesson I could not have learned. A quick eye, a tender, active hand, and an entire absence of hurry and bustle, I perceive to be indispensable if you wish to excel in trolling. The three trout that I have killed, and the five that weigh down your basket, would make no unhandsome dish.

“ *Old S.* Shall I empty mine into your basket now, or wait till we are nearer the house?

* Nothing seems to revive a tired trout more than the sight of a man with a landing net.

“C. Neither one nor the other ; the idea of my robbing you of your fish !

“Old S. Pray, Sir, do take these three beauties, at any rate, to the missis, and she won’t have the laugh against us, as she had the other day, when our baskets were empty.

“C. Well, I won’t offend you by refusing, especially as there is a lady in the case.”

These stories shall be brought to an end with an extract from a book, exactly one hundred years old, called “A Natural History of Fishes,” which has in it some of the oddest plates of fish and reptiles one has ever seen. The author gives a good description of the pike, its habits, voracity, and length of life. He says :—“In 1730, while Peter Bold, of Bold, in Lancashire, was netting some pits in Burton Wood, he saw a pike lying among the weeds. Mr. Ralph Taylor, a gentleman who accompanied him, twice attempted to seize the pike, but it escaped. Afterwards the pit was drawn, and a tench about five pounds weight pulled out ; and so was this pike, with the tail of another hanging out of its mouth, which, being measured with the other, proved nearly of equal size. About the year 1740, when Robert Hyde, of Cosnal, Esq., came of age, he had a large company of gentlemen to dine with him, to whom a fisherman brought three pikes, one of twenty-three pounds, another of twelve pounds, and a third of four pounds, which he had caught by trolling in the Weaver ; that of twelve pounds appeared in many places to have been bit,

which he thus accounted for :—While he was drawing the fish to land, it was laid hold of by a larger pike, which stuck fast, and was landed, but then quitted his hold and got away."

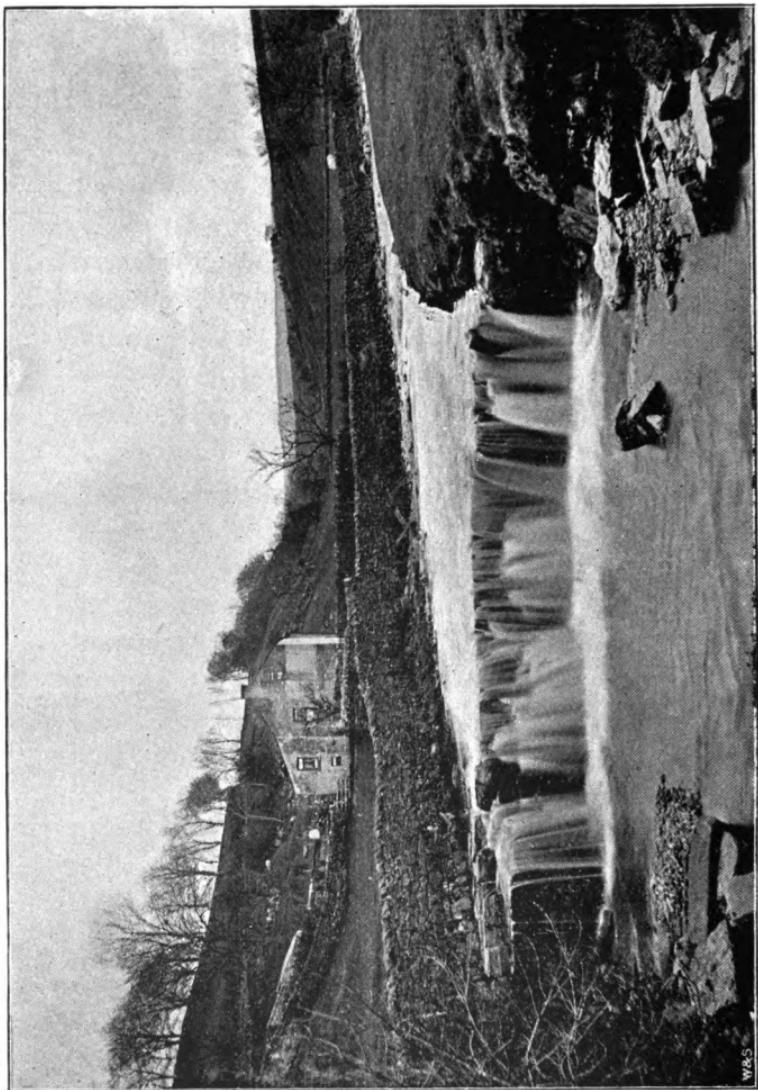
So in old times, as now, fishing, with its glorious uncertainties, gave interest to the men who followed it, ever providing some novel experience, either in regard to the fish angled for, or the living creatures which in tree, field, or wood, accompany the angler in his hours of recreation. The fisherman who has observant eyes, and a knack of noting what he sees, will make his own books, and gather pleasant memories to enliven wintry days.

A DAY IN ALNWICK PARK.

ALNWICK at last ! Here is the old Border town, of which I have heard for years, but never seen till to-day. If the historic associations failed to attract, it would have interest for a disciple of Izaak Walton, for here is the centre of a noted angling district ; the Coquet is not far away, the Aln runs close to the town, first passing through the magnificent park of the Duke of Northumberland. A few pleasant days have been spent at Alnmouth, where golf rather than fishing is the order of the day. But when the tide flows up the river mouth, then is the time the boys hasten to throw out their lines for the flat fish which come up with it in shoals. The bait is the sandworm, surely one of the lowest organisms, and the fish take it greedily. But they are best caught from a boat. It does not compare with fly fishing ; but when four or five are at it, each with a line and two hooks, and the fish are on the feed, there is some pleasureable excitement in pulling them out. If there are four pair of hands aboard, there is growing excitement. "Here's another !" "I've a good one on !" "There, he's gone, after all !" "Look out ; I've two !" "In with them !" "Don't sit on those worms !" and so on, until the elders grow weary, or want their tea, and are put ashore with twenty or thirty flat fish like flounders in the creel—leaving the youngsters to take their fill of the sport.

But we have the Duke's gracious permission for a day on his private waters, and on a lovely April morning we start soon after breakfast for the park. There is a little wind stirring from the south-west, and as we drive toward the town hope rises within that the day will merit a record. We call at Hardy Bros. for a few flies—"Greenwell's Glory" and "Hardy's Fancy"—and then along the streets past the ancient castle, famous in history and familiar in pictorial representation, with its picturesque gateway, and statues surmounting the tower, and so into the park. It is a place beautiful beyond description. Immense trees—beech, elm, and Scotch spruce—towering high above carpets of garlic, dog mercury, and wood anemone; small burns gurgling down tiny glens to the river which winds in the bottom. Now a blackbird screams as it hurries away, now we hear the call of a cock pheasant, or get a glimpse of him stalking like a king under the trees; and again we note the herds of fallow deer on the green slopes farther away. Presently the driver pulls up the horse near the bridge where we open proceedings, one angler with long two handed rod going up stream, while his friend, with humbler implement, takes his way downwards. Happy then and through the long pleasant hours were those two bright boys—good company for their elders—who ran in and out among the budding trees, flowers, and singing birds. It seems a pity that the time of boyhood passes so quickly, that happy period of life—

"When birds, and flowers, and I were friends.'



A CUMBERLAND STREAM.

Let me note such pictures as are likely to abide longest on memory's tablets. There is the spot where the first sizable fish was taken, the largest landed during the day. A long still reach, over which it was useless to cast except in a strong wind, terminated in a lovely ripple among stones. Overhead a few trees flung their shadows upon the water. We began at the bottom of the stream, and worked up to where some dead branches were fixed, the stream pouring under them. A cast close to the obstruction, a small, unobtrusive rise, and the next instant a hooked fish was working down stream to where the shallows presented a fit landing place. Out he came, and was thrown up the bank, a speckled beauty in fair condition. It was pleasant to lay him in the bag bottom with a handful of grass, and then seek a companion for him in the place where he rose. That is a picture memory will carry for some time.

Shall I soon forget the scene by the wooden bridge, just by which the waterfall makes soft unceasing melody? A background of level grass, on which lay fallen trees, with a well wooded slope beyond. An angler, watching his moving flies through his spectacles; smooth water below the ripple, a small patch of gravel in the middle, and wading a few inches from it a water ouzel with white breast; over all the light of the evening sun. Does the noble owner of all this see and enjoy these sights more than common people whom he admits to his grounds? I doubt it. For this day at least, to all intents and purposes, these

rich undulating lands, these slopes dotted with sheep, these singing birds, and melodious streams with primrose banks, have been "mine to enjoy," as Cowper says in his well known lines about the mountains and the valleys.

The next catch, and, alas ! loss of two good casts of flies, was at a similar place lower down. We were taking a short cut over the green grass, when the soft melody of rippling water drew our steps straight to the place. It was indeed a likely spot. The great stones stood out above water so near one of the best streams that we stood upon them and threw upward, taking three or four fish in quick succession. How useful would the landing net have been had we but brought it ! It was here an accident occurred which cost three good hours of valuable time. A good trout had been played, and with much difficulty lifted out on the bank. The line was being straightened when it caught the foot, and in an instant the sharp barbed point of the orange dun was buried deep in the finger. An attempt was made to cut it out, but the penknife was blunt and the hook fast ; so there was nothing to be done but leave rod and bag with the pleasant young companion of the forenoon hours and go back to the town. It was not a serious trouble, but decidedly uncomfortable, and it was a relief to have the bit of steel extracted. "You will know how to do it the next time," said the kindly doctor. "How is it done?" the reader asks. First scrape the hook shank clean of the wrapping, turn it

till the point shows itself outside, then draw it out point first. It is not a very painful operation. And now back to the water side. It is only three o'clock; time yet remains for worthy work.

The trout rose well through the afternoon, especially when the clouds cut off the sun's glare. In one place, where obstructing rocks made the quick running water rush and curl, we had fine sport, though the line had to be thrown over trees high as our head. How quickly the time passed, as the fish kept rising and the bag grew heavier! Then came a longing for a drink of tea, and a pause was made to interview the kind lady at the Abbey Farm.

If I could describe the abbey in the great park, where I take my tea alone in the open and pen these notes! It is on a rising ground above the river, amid the grandest scenery. How well those old monks cared for themselves! Deer in the forest, trout in the stream, cows and sheep in the pasture, fine prospects, the songs of birds, and the calm blue heaven above! Not very austere, ascetic lives were their's. Within this walled enclosure, strong as a fortress, are green spaces, which were once gardens, huge blocks of solid masonry, pierced with narrow windows, and archways which look like the entrance to a cathedral crypt. Strange scenes have these ivy burdened walls looked down upon! I see the monks in cowl and sandals, the tonsure, the fat benevolent face—but stay, let me ask, Could any of them fly fish, I wonder? If not, I can; and leaving these musings

let me thank the Giver of all for this refreshing meal, and resume my saunter by the river bank towards the town. There were many likely places yet to cast over. But stop ! Has the reader ever found himself by the water side, engrossed in his sport, a new fly just affixed, and the best of streams near him ; then, suddenly recollecting himself, has consulted his watch, to find that the train starts in ten minutes under the hour, and that *about* four miles lie between him and the station ! Then he will understand what followed. A hasty packing up of everything, and run over green grass, cutting off corners, then quick walking till the park lodge was reached, and it was seen that ample time remained to do the last mile. Oh, the mental relief ! Yet it seemed impossible to cease hurrying. Here is the old town once more, with anciently named streets—Bailif Gate, Narrow Gate, Bond Gate. Let me assume a leisurely aspect, moving among these respectable people. Here is the kindly doctor's house ; here is Hardy's, with the stuffed birds in the window—an owl, a widgeon, a partridge—and here at last is the station. Good time, and ten minutes to spare.

Here we meet our dear friend, to whose kindness we owe the day's pleasure. He is tired and hungry, but has had fine sport. Fifteen brace at least, and dozens of undersized fish put back. The boys are bright as daisies, and ready for more fun and exercise ; the elders are glad to rest. It has been a superb day, and, notwithstanding all accidents and losses of "hung up" casts, a most enjoyable one.

AN ANGLER'S BOOK. FOR A STORMY DAY.

THERE is not a particle of colour in the sky, the whole heavens showing one unvarying mass of dull leaden cloud. The rain pours steadily down, the only change being when the gusts of wind drive it to smite hard on the windows. The burn in the field opposite runs thick and fast, making foamy rapids where stones impede its course. In the fields standing pools fill the hollows. Yonder winding road looks sloppy, and one man is visible pacing forlornly a short distance from his cart. How the poor horse hangs its head ! Looking farther away, the rain seems less to fall than to march along over the fields. The trees look chilled, and shiver in the wind ; the roadway is guttered by many streams ; the daisy plants in the lawn, washed clean, show distinctly among the grass ; two or three jackdaws passed just now, struggling against the wind. Everything outside is dismal ; let me seek the sunny warmth of the glowing fire, and solace myself with a book.

Here is one which has waited in silent patience for such a day as this. An uncomplaining suitor for attention. You shall have audience to-day.

It is a curious old book, in size, type, and binding resembling a volume of Addison's *Spectator*, a first edition of which in eight volumes stands on my top

book-shelf. "The British Angler," by John Williamson; London: 1740. The first paragraph shows how popular was the gentle art a hundred and fifty years ago. "If a man was to read over all the Books of Angling that have been published for about a Hundred Years past he would be apt to think that this Science was like Poetry, not only for Mr. Walton's reason, because Men must be born with Inclinations to it, but because it seems to have arrived at its highest Perfection almost at once, and to have been the same in the said Mr. Walton as the other was in Homer." A delicate compliment to the immortal author of "The Complete Angler." Our author confesses in his preface that his work is not wholly original, but that "All that was solid, and had the Test of Experience to confirm it, in the Old Writers, I have retained; leaving out, and sometimes briefly refuting their false reasonings." He then acknowledges that his great difficulty was to find sufficient to add. However, he affirms that the "great Advantage, as well as Ornament of this Book, and which most eminently distinguish it from all others, is the Poetical Part, which cannot but be equally useful and entertaining." Much of this also is borrowed, but some verses are original or adapted to the writer's conception of an angler's book. After the introduction, the first part deals with the fisherman's apparatus; the second contains descriptions of the various sorts of fish; part third deals with "The Practice of Angling;" and the book closes with an appendix on "Fish Ponds,"

“The Laws of Angling,” and “Receipts for Dressing Fish.”

With this general account of the book we may open it here and there, and as the wind and rain beat upon the windows, find some interest in its quaint observations. Our author begins well, like a horse fresh at the start, with an eloquent chapter on the beauty of river scenery and in praise of angling; but furnishes an amusing contrast between the poetry of his beginning and the prose of the close. “What a delightful Scene,” says a late author, “is a soft murmuring Stream! Whether we reflect on the gentle Motion of its Waters, or the various Benefits and Advantages arising from it, or use our endeavours to trace it to its Head, we are charmed with its glidings in such beautiful meanders.” From this the descent is great to careful instruction as to the boiling of a tench:—“Make your sauce with two anchovies, boiled in a little water till they are dissolved. Then let it stand to settle, drain it off, and add what Quantity of Butter you think fit, Half a Pint of stewed Oysters, and a Quarter of a Pint of Shrimps. Garnish the Dish with Lemon and Mushrooms.” But really this is scarcely fair. Even the lover of nature must eat to keep himself alive.

“I call Angling an Art, and an Art it is worthy a wise Man’s learning. It is, said an excellent Angler, somewhat like poetry. . . . He that expects to be a good Angler should not only possess a penetrating Wit, but a large Measure of Hope and

Patience, and a propensity to the Art itself; but having once acquired and practised it, Angling will then prove so pleasant that, like Virtue, it will be a Reward to itself." With this all good fishermen will agree. But now let us hear how a good rod was made in those days. "Get a white Deal, or Fir-board, thick, free from knots and frets, and seven or eight foot long: let a dexterous Joiner divide this with a Saw into several Breadths: then, with his Planes, let him shoot them round, smooth, and Rushgrown, or taper. One of these will be seven or eight Foot of the Bottom of the Rod, all in one Piece. Fasten it to a Hazel of six or seven Foot long, proportioned to the Fir and also Rushgrown. This Hazel may consist of two or three Pieces; to the Top of which fix a Piece of Yew about two Foot long, made round, taper, and smooth; and to the Yew a piece of small round and smooth Whalebone, five or six Inches long. This will be a curious Rod, if artificially worked. But be sure that the Deal for the Bottom be strong and round." A curious rod! Let us compute its length from the "Fir" bottom part to the whalebone at the top. Why, it would be seventeen feet six inches long. Full directions are given for staining and varnishing, with this obvious counsel: "It is found very useful to have Rings or Eyes, made of fine wire, and placed upon your Rod from one end to the other, in such a manner that when you lay your Eye to one, you may see through all the rest." Everything is added that needs to be known as to lines, hooks, floats, plummets, and "other

utensils," and a long chapter on natural baits follows. But whoever, before or since, thought of putting these things into verse ?

" Hooks, plummets, floats, and penknife, you must get,
Bags, panniers, landing hook and landing net ;
Your whetstone, line case, boxes, gentles, worm,
Links, hairs, and thread, and silk that may adorn,
All ready overnight, lest you forget at morn.

The writer, in one section, follows the Father of Fishermen in mentioning various ointments and scents as useful in attracting fish to the bait. Here is an example :—" Take man's fat and cat's fat, of each half-an-ounce ; mummy finely powdered, three drams ; cumming seed finely powdered, one dram ; distilled oil of anise and spike, of each six drops ; civil, two grains ; camphire, four grains ; make an ointment according to art. When you angle with this, anoint eight inches of the line next the hook. Keep it in a pewter box, made something taper ; and, when you use it, never angle with less than two or three hairs next the hook, because if you angle with one hair, it will not stick so well to the line. If you mix some of this ointment with a little Venice turpentine, it will stick the faster, but clog not your line with too much on at a time." Some of these "unguents" are horrid mixtures. "Some anoint their bait with the marrow got out of a heron's thigh-bone, and some use the fat and grease of a heron. Some advise to take the bones and skull of a dead man, at the opening of a grave, and beat them into powder, and to put of this powder into the moss wherein you keep your

worms ; but others like the grave-earth as well, and perhaps both may as well be let alone." We rather think they had, but as the next paragraph begins with "man's fat and cat's fat," we leave the unsavoury topic altogether.

Let us now turn to the sections on different kinds of fish, and extract a sentence or two about the trout, "The venison of the waters, and so like the land venison, that he comes in and goes out of season with the stag and buck." It is evident our author has gathered careful information about the fish he describes. "The trout delights in small purling streams, that are very swift and clear, running on stones or gravel. He feeds while strong in the swiftest streams, but more usually on the side of the stream than in the deepest part of it, unless he be a very large one. He is often found behind a stone, block, or some bank that shoots forth with a point into the river, where the stream causes a whirling of the water, like the eddy of the tide ; especially if there be a shade over his head, as a bush, foam, or hollow hanging bank, under which he can shelter himself. In the spring and latter end of summer he lies at the tail of a stream, but in May at the upper end. If his hold be near he stays long in a place. Though as the weather in spring grows warmer so the trout grows stronger, and departs from the deep still waters into the sharp streams and gravel ; yet the best trout often in summer, in excessive droughts, are driven out of the small shallow streams into the plain deeps, where you may catch them with dibbing, or on

a gloomy, cloudy, and windy day that furls the water, with the cast-fly." Anyone would say that this paragraph showed close observation of the habits of the fish.

But we must omit various passages about pike, perch, roach, and tench, which we had marked for quotation. Here is an ancient "wrinkle" for the dace-fisher, not unpractised in these modern days. "If the water be high, so as to rise almost to the banks of the river, then fasten to your line an artificial fly called the caterpillar fly; then take a large yellow gentle (the yellower the better), run the hook through the skin of him, and draw him up to the tail of your artificial fly; this being done whip with it on the surface of the water; and if you are diligent and expert, you may assure yourself of good sport."

Our author advises his readers to study carefully in all weathers all sorts of waters, the character of the soil or rocks over which they run, the nature and habits of the various fish. He would have each fisherman become "a perfect and judicious artist;" and certainly such instructions as he gives in these pages are likely to help him to that perfection. We must not part company with him without quoting a few more lines of his poetical instructions:—

" To catch the Trout, the Angler's chief Delight ;
Tread softly, and be sure keep out of Sight
Or the sly fish will baulk thy appetite.
Nice as thy hopes, too, be thy rod and line,
Nice be thy flies, and cast exactly fine.
Nor rod, nor line should want proportion fit,
Full six yards each, if so the stream permit :

Taper and light, as long from hand to hook,
If with the flies or in a chrystral brook :
Or ev'n should rising wind the stream invest,
Yet still the firmer, you succeed the best,
But here good judgment is the surest test."

Rain still falls outside, and shows no sign of
abatement. What a boon is a book on a dismal day !

AN OTTER'S FOOTPRINTS.

THE river by the Brewery Bridge has been frozen for week's past, right across mostly, but here and there long dark gaps in the ice show where the stream runs too rapid to freeze. The snow has settled on the ice, so that any footmark of beast or bird is easily discerned. Some one had said that an otter's marks had been seen; and, looking over the bridge, they were plainly visible, much like a dog's footprint, only larger. The marks were nearly in a straight line and single, showing that the creature had walked, putting one foot before the other. The proof that they were left by an amphibious animal lay in this, that the line of footprints went to the edge of the ice, and there ended, showing that the animal had taken to the water. There are other anglers than men; only the otter poaches, and kills sometimes for the sake of killing. What wonder that he has a bad reputation among those who care for salmon and trout!

It is not often a fisherman sees this aquatic quadruped. It is a long animal, measuring two feet, and its tail sixteen inches. Its eyes and ears are very small, and the former are so placed that its sight takes in a wide range. It is well known that unless very hungry, the otter, having killed a salmon, eats only the dainty morsel near the head, so that it is a great destroyer. Mr. John Watson, of Kendal, in one of

his books, describes a stream at night, and how, soon as the sound of an approaching otter is heard, every fish sinks silently to the bottom. Richard Jefferies, in his "Life of the Fields," gives a graphic account of the process of hunting the otter, and says, "no creature could be more absolutely wild, depending solely upon his own exertions for existence. Of olden times he was believed to be able to scent the fish in the water at a considerable distance, as a hound scents a fox, and go straight to them. If he gets among a number he will kill a great many more than he needs. For this reason he has been driven by degrees from most of the rivers where he used to be found, but still exists in Somerset and Devon." We may add, from the evidence of our eyes, in the South Tyne as well. The following is from Frank Buckland's "Notes and Jottings from Animal Life."

In a paper upon otters, the author relates some of his experiences of these animals, several live specimens of which had from time to time come into his possession. One specimen, which Mr. Buckland purchased in 1875, became comparatively tame, and was afterwards sent to the Westminster Aquarium, where naturalists had an opportunity of studying at leisure its interesting habits. After giving an account of the structure of the otter, and the wonderful facility with which he captures his prey under water, the author says:—"I have described, when writing of the anatomy of the guillemot, the wonderful bubbles of air that invariably follow that bird when under water, and I

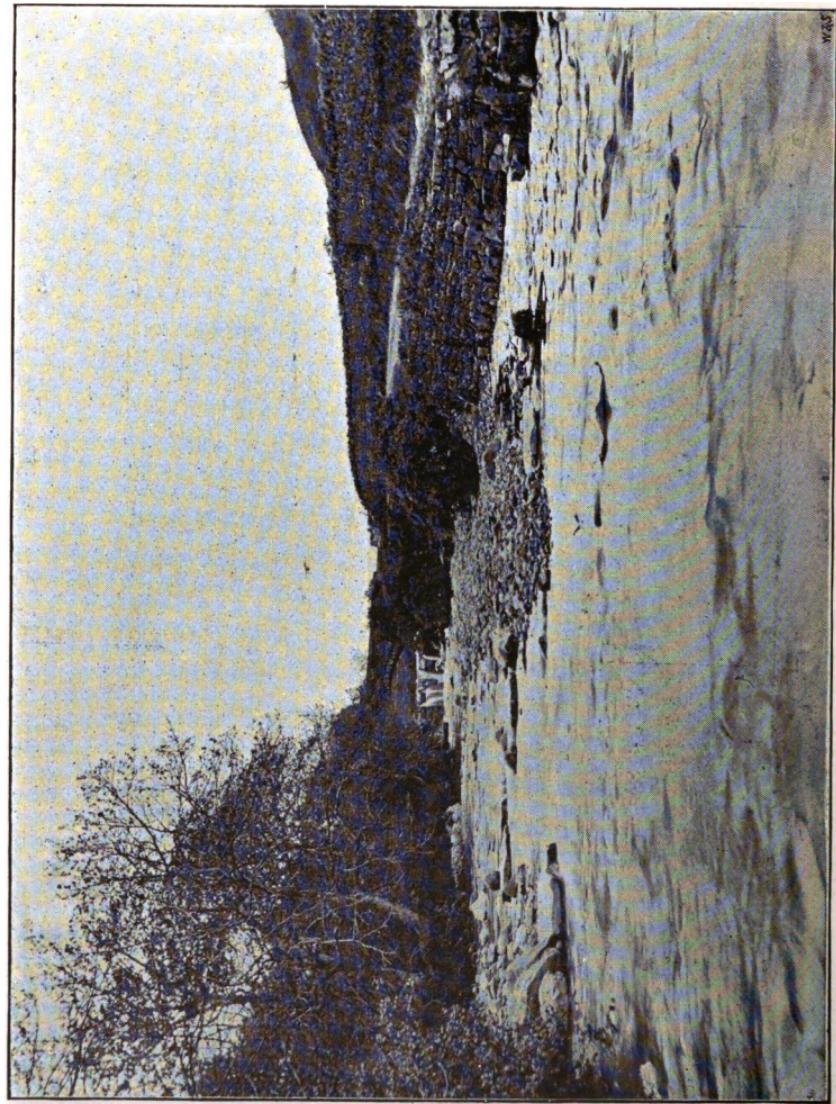
have explained how the air is stored underneath the feathers, and given out when the bird is diving. In the otter, a somewhat similar phenomenon can be observed. As he swims along under water, he is followed by a train of the most lovely air-bubbles, which appear exactly like beads of quicksilver. The origin of this air I cannot quite make out. A large proportion of it comes directly from the lungs. This is important; the otter evidently has some difficulty in sinking in the water—he therefore lets out the air to enable him to go down; but at the same time a good deal of air comes from underneath the fur. When the seal dives, no air appears to come from underneath his coat.

“The otter, it has been remarked, always takes the largest fish in the tank first, leaving the smallest fish till the last. He never attempts to eat them under water, but always comes to the bank-side to have his meal. The otter invariably begins to eat the fish by crunching up the head, never the tail; holding his prey by his forepaws, so that it has not the least chance of escape, and munching it into very small bits. I have prepared the skull, and find that the canine teeth are very trenehant, and almost scissor-like in their action; they are conical in shape, much sharper than the canines of a dog or cat. When a fish is caught, the otter immediately transfixes it through the head with his sharp canines, the action of which is such that the fish is held by them as in a rabbit-trap, and cannot escape. The otter holds the

fish for some little time between the canines before he begins to eat, waiting till it is quite dead and quiet. In eating, he never uses his canines at all, but bites at the fish with the side of the mouth only. The molars and pre-molars are also very sharp, but capable of crushing any substance into very small bits.

Since writing this I met a gentleman at Great Corby, on the Eden, who told me otters were carefully protected in that neighbourhood. He had gone up quietly and sat watching in the boathouse till the otters came out, playing with their pups, and whistling, he said, like boys. I am told that a lad at Slaggyford noticed a female otter with two young ones by the river-side. The parent seemed to be teaching the young ones to swim, and carrying them one at a time on her back, plunged into the water, making them swim out themselves. By-and-bye the boy threw a stone with such effect that he knocked over one of the cubs, and brought it home alive, where it died shortly after.

GOSSIP GATE BRIDGE, NEAR ALSTON.



THE RESTFULNESS OF ANGLING.

IT has often been a puzzle to those who have no care for angling that men who are of active temperament should follow a pursuit which demands so much patience. We who are in the secret reply that our patience is more called for when we cannot get to the waterside than when we are actually fishing, and that nothing does so give recuperation to our exhausted nerves as a spell of our loved recreation. It is the men of active temperament—those who in their ordinary calling spend too much nervous energy—who need the quieting influence of such a recreation as angling. “Cannot you take walking exercise?” Nay, to take a walk means to keep on thinking, the busy cares following one like the moving cloud of insects which buzz overhead on a hot summer’s day. But with rod in hand we forget *everything*.

Why, the angling zest seizes you before you see the water. How hard one finds it, while yet on the way to the river, to restrain the sense of eager hurry, of wanting to be at it! Few men saunter to the water side. You may have the entire day before you, the sun may be at present too bright for fishing; everything, it may be, will be gained by delay, yet the angler finds himself subject to an eagerness which carries his feet quickly over the road, almost in spite of himself. It is not so difficult to walk slowly homeward!

L

“A want of occupation is not rest,” and the active-minded man needs that which will take him out of himself, and give his mind repose by occupying it with that which is pleasing. A good illustration of this is found in the “Record of a Girlhood,” by Frances A. Kemble, which our readers will enjoy, especially as the writer so felicitously puts the explanation of this fact:—“We haunted it (the river Wey) constantly for another purpose. My mother had a perfect passion for fishing, and would spend whole days by the river pursuing her favourite sport. We generally all accompanied her, carrying baskets and tackle and bait, kettles and camp stools, and looking very much like a family of gipsies on the tramp. We were each armed with a rod, and were more or less interested in the sport. We often started after an early breakfast, and, taking our luncheon with us, remained the whole day long absorbed in our quiet occupation. My mother was perfectly enamoured of angling, in her indiscriminate enthusiasm, and “took to the water,” whether the wind blew, the sun shone, or the rain fell. Fishing—under the most propitious or unpropitious circumstances—was not, indeed, necessarily catching fish; but still, fishing; and she was almost equally happy whether she did or did not catch anything. I have known her remain all day in patient expectation of the “glorious nibble”—stand through successive showers, with her clothes between whiles drying on her back, and only reluctantly leave the water’s edge when it was literally too dark to see

her float. Although we all fished, I was the only member of the family who inherited my mother's passion for it, and it only developed much later in me, for at this time I often preferred taking a book under the trees by the river side to throwing a line, but towards the middle of my life I became a fanatical fisherwoman, and was obliged to limit my waste of time to one day in the week, spent on the Lennox lakes, or I should infallibly have wandered thither and dreamed away my hours on their charming shores or smooth expanse daily. I have often wondered that both my mother and myself (persons of exceptional impatience of disposition and irritable excitability of temperament) should have taken such delight in so still and monotonous an occupation, especially to the point of spending whole days in an unsuccessful pursuit of it. The fact is that the excitement of hope, keeping the attention constantly alive, is the secret of the charm of this strong fascination, infinitely more than even the exercise of successful skill. This element of prolonged and intense expectation, combined with the peculiarly soothing nature of the external objects which surround the angler, forms at once a powerful stimulus and a sedative, especially grateful in their double action upon excitable organisations." But there is more than this. Angling is a diversion to which a man will have recourse when his heart is heavy with sorrow.

As I sat in the shade of some trees above the river bank one morning I noticed an aged man fishing

from the opposite side. I knew he was in the midst of trouble. At a place fifty or more miles away his youngest daughter was lying in dangerous illness. Telegrams were coming every day at noon with reports of her condition. The night before we had had special prayer offered for her in a meeting, and for her parents. An inconsiderate observer would have thought it unseemly to be by the river side, rod in hand, at such a time. But how well an angler can understand it ! It is the very thing a fisherman would be likely to do in order to obtain a slight relief from the tormenting suspense. I waited till he finished. He left off soon as twelve o'clock came, the time the telegram was expected, and I saw him depart, with the fervent wish that he might hear good news of the sufferer. I am quite prepared, therefore, to accept the suggestion of Dr. W. C. Prime, who, in his book "*I go a Fishing*," hazards the conjecture that the disciples, after our Lord's condemnation and death, resorted to the lakeside as a relief from their sorrow.

"Probably they were on this particular evening weary with earnest expectancy, not yet satisfied ; tired of waiting and longing and looking up the hillside on the Jerusalem road for His appearance ; and I have no doubt that when this weariness became exhausting, Peter sought on the water something of the old excitement that he had known from boyhood, and that to all the group it seemed a fitting way in which to pass the long night before them, otherwise to be weary as well as sleepless."

A DULL DAY IN APRIL.

THE sun has not showed his face the whole day.

We looked out in the early morning and saw heavy clouds resting on the top of Cross Fell, on whose sides lay still white patches of snow. The skies were lead-coloured, the wind stood in the south-east, and it was an open question whether the day would be wet or dry. However, we waited till our letters came (never early in this country town), and then, notwithstanding the chilly wind, resolved to try for a trout or two. Pleasant was the walk through green fields which recent rains have enlivened, and in which, before a month is over, myriads of flowers will bloom. Sheep and lambs are everywhere. This has been a fine season for the multiplying flocks. Just by a babbling burn we made a pause, to put our rod and line in position and prepare for the business of the day. The river flows a short field's length from the little bridge where we stand. You can just hear the rush of the water. What flies? Ah, that is not matter for long debate. March-brown for the tail-fly, Spring-black and water-hen for droppers. Now let us try this likely stream at the burn-foot. To a friend standing among the trees we say, "Now watch me catch a nice little trout!" Alas, the first *was* a little one. It was carefully unhooked and returned. Just below flowed a splendid stream—newly made for this

season, one might say. "How can that be?" The answer is that few things are more noticeable in early spring fishing than the alteration made in the river's course by the winter's floods. One recalls an interesting chapter in "Huxley's Physiography" on the process, constantly going on, of disintegration by means of rivers. They are really altering the shape and substance of the earth; only the process is slow. For example, we now stand by a place where a thick sloping wall has been built to stop the river's encroachment on the field. Great logs of wood fastened with iron stanchions are at the water's edge, and above these, great stones, some half-a-ton in weight. Yet the flood has made a clean breach into the wall, and loosening the earth underneath, has tumbled the stones in heaps. The streams run differently from their last year's course. The deep hole where we always looked for a big trout is a stony shallow, and the water, cutting a new course through the gravel higher up, has made this fine stream for our summer fishing. The fish have new haunts and homes this year. Half-a-mile higher a boiling stream ran close under the bank. There, last season, we caught our first sizeable fish, landing it on the shingly beach below. Now the river has forsaken the place altogether, and runs beyond a braid of stones, twenty-two measured yards across. So the waters wear the stones, and thus the whole earth is changing. But let us move onward, through the trees which cover this slope, and drop down upon the river at another point. Here is a

likely place. A noisy "burn" empties itself into the river, and there are always good fish in the deep hole at its mouth. There's a rise. Another, and missed again! And now I have him—a fair-sized fish, and in good condition. There he lies, number one, among the damp grass in my bag. And here's his fellow come to make a first brace. Why he has actually wrapped the flies and gut all round him. He is safely caught ; but it looks as if the hook had never touched him. Two more are taken in a sharp stream higher up, and then because of a long shallow reach we walk for half a mile, noting the primroses and wood anemones as we pass, and the white bloom of the sloe bush in a thicket of budding leaves. Here's the wooden bridge where we cross. A cast or two in the stream above produces another brace, one fish a good one. Now for lunch and a short rest. Then downstream to the burn pool. Here is disappointment. The best place yields nothing. Let us try up the burn. We take three, similar in size. Now the heavy clouds empty themselves in teeming rain, and the fish stop rising. We may as well work toward home. Here, however, is a place to be tried. The wind blows hard up-stream, and there are sure to be fish feeding in the slack under those trees. Ah, I have him! And now another is hooked—the best fish to-day. For the first time the landing-net, left at home, is thought of. Let him play a while. Now I must lift him shear out ; open mouthed he comes. A nice fish, but his head looks too large. He wants

feeding up. Here is another. This is warming me to the work. Now what is this? No trout by the way he struggles. Out of the water he leaps once, twice; but soon lies shining like silver among the green grass. A salmon-trout—a juvenile, who must go back, with an injunction to come again when he weighs, as he will, three or four pounds. The rain is coming on again; we had had enough fishing, and six brace is not a bad result. The March-brown has done most execution. The hours have been happily spent, though under dull skies. And now home to tea.

FAIRLY CAUGHT.

NOT the fish this time, but the fisherman. Why did I venture out on such a morning? Heavy rain had fallen during the night, and continued at intervals through the early forenoon. There would be a nice water on ; that was one attraction. And it was Monday, when no minister of religion, who has put life into his Sunday duties, is good for much. Lunch was packed, and everything got ready. But before I had passed the door-step, down came the rain again ! So I settled to a little writing. In ten minutes the sun was out once more, and off I went, glad to leave the houses behind, and rest my eyes on the lovely green of the tender grass. O ! what sights are here and everywhere in the country, every day, for men who have eyes to see them ! The "Fell" side showed a long green slope, marked irregularly with lines of walls, and dotted with trees, sheep, and grazing cattle. Above the fields bare brown moorland, down which shadows crept. Yet higher, a patch of blue sky, like a clear sea shut in with shores of cloud. Five birds passed, flying between the tree tops and the sky-line. Every now and then the wind came in gusts.

The river was higher than I expected, and it was not easy to get across. The wind blew right in my teeth. It is a good two miles to the footbridge. If I were but on the other side, that slack yonder might be

fished, where some good trout lie feeding. There was nothing for it but to walk toward the bridge. Who could help stopping to try this likely place? A burn pours its brown water into the larger stream, and the trout are sure to be feeding on the shallows. Now for a try. Why, the natural flies are on the water in such abundance that it seems unlikely the fish will look at an imitation. But here's one, and a nice fish too. Let me creep under this tree and throw again. Ah! there's another, to keep the first company.

A perfect tempest of hail descends suddenly, and drives me to the nearest tree for shelter. I try vainly for a while, when the shower is past, and then tramp up to the bridge, eating as I walk. From the opposite bank it is easy throwing a long cast, and I take two more, besides hooking and losing several. But how can you lose what you never had? asks the father of anglers.

And now the rain comes down in earnest. I quit fishing perforce, and find partial shelter under a rough stone wall, hoping against hope that it may soon cease. A hazy mist veils the landscape now. Those houses on the hillside which stood out in view so clearly half-an-hour ago, are scarcely visible. The poor sheep, turning their backs to the storm, run before it, and are seen—a ludicrous sight—sheltering on the wrong side of the hedge! The wind sweeps along, bringing heavier rain. Every bird is hidden and silent. The flowers bend their heads. This is a steady downpour and no mistake; to windward the

hills are covered with thick clouds. No proper shelter is near, and I am three miles or more from home. Happy is the fisherman's lot ! Let me part up my rod and tramp homeward through the soppy fields.

It may be the reader has never been caught in this fashion, has never seen, with dire foreboding, the approach of a swift-moving black cloud covering the scene on which his eyes had just been feasting with inky blackness ? He has not, perhaps, vainly scanned the bare landscape in hope of discerning a barn or shelter-giving tree ; has not known the sensation of water trickling coldly down his trousers till each boot was filled to overflow ; has never had the dull feeling at his shoulders as the rain, after short siege, took the defences of his summer clothing, establishing itself below the shirt collar behind. Has the reader never been thus fairly caught ? Then let him mingle with personal thankfulness for such escape sympathy with those who have. In half-an-hour the sun breaks out again, the skies smiling as though no cloud had ever hidden their fair face. Once more beauty shows everywhere, the winding river gleaming like silver in the sunlight. Out come the birds again. Though great clouds still rest on the far-off hills, high up the sky is perfectly blue, while below the quiet cattle graze peacefully as though the day had known no storm. But the fisherman is dripping wet. His bag holds five trout. The rain has conquered his zeal for once. He has been fairly caught.

A TRY AT THE GRAYLING.

IT is a far cry from Cumberland to the Derbyshire Dove; yet the opportunity afforded during a run into the Midlands was too good to be missed by a Northerner, whose season for trout fishing ends all too soon with the 14th of September, and who, until the next spring, cannot look at a fish. We have some grayling in our Northern rivers, though many an angler has never set eyes on one. They have been introduced into certain waters by gentlemen who want fishing when the trout and salmon seasons are over. By some they are counted as a nuisance, as the grayling fisher can hardly help catching trout in October, and some forget to put them back again. We have known them more or less since our boyhood, and it was with keen anticipation that we accepted an invitation to do a little grayling fishing in Cotton's famous river, the Dove, in a preserved water not far from Uttoxeter. Our companion was "an old hand," who knew the water well, and could beguile the railway journey and the long field walk which followed with what Izaak Walton would call "good discourse concerning fish and fishing."

We started early, and noted from the railway how the white dew lay still on the grass, how the trees were changing from green to yellow, and from yellow to bare branches. Beyond Tutbury we got a glimpse of the Dove, slow winding through level meadows,

and noted where, in one locality, it had changed its own course, leaving a poplar-fringed grassy channel to show where its clear waters once ran. Walking a short distance down the line, we soon left the houses behind and were among green fields, where flocks of starlings fed almost under the heels of grazing cattle. Over a hill, whose red cliff fell sheer to the water's edge, we passed into some more fields, and, gladly throwing down our heavy bags, put our weapons in form, and prepared for the fray. One fixed his heavily-shotted tackle to a fine line, and throwing in a few maggots, began bottom fishing ; his companion, grasping a strange rod, looked up and down a stream he had never seen before, and tried them with the fly.

It is a lovely spot. Behind where we stood a long timber-covered ridge shut in the view, the fields creeping half-way up the slope. The river winds sinuously through flat fields divided by a rail fence, tall hawthorns showing where an ancient hedge once ran. The place is a complete solitude. Now and again a crow flew across, then a wild duck. The river is an angler's ideal, slow moving waters interspersed with rippling, gravelly scours.

But how about the grayling ? Ah, we are not forgetting them ! But an angler's eye sees much besides the stream and rising fish.

We had our first rise in a ripple, at the head of which a fading willow shed its long leaves on the water. Ah, what a pull the fish gave ! "This is no trout," we said. It might have been an eel we had

hooked. Soon it lay on the grass—not a large fish, but above the regulation nine inches. A silvery, beautiful form, with a mouth tender as tissue paper, a three-cornered pupil to his eye, and the smell of thyme which angling authors speak of. A little further was a stream which ran with a rush below a hollow bank. Here we hooked another and a better fish. It sprang up at the fly like a trout. Aye, what a fight we had to secure that fish ! The stream ran like a mill-race ; below was a tree under whose roots the water rushed ; no landing-net was available. There was nothing for it but drowning the fish, drawing it slowly up-stream to a shelving bank, and getting it ashore there. This was done. Next, a perilous climb down to the water's edge, the fish thrown up, and a climb back. Ah ! what a beauty ! O ! for four or five brace of such ! But not to-day. Another, and a good dace completed the catch. The bottom-fisher did little better, but lost one or two of good size.

We did enjoy that cup of tea in the early afternoon by the water-side. A workman's flat tin bottle, laid across a cup in which some spirit burnt, soon heated the tea. A refreshing cup !

Soon we tramped toward the station, and the day was done.

We write this in the train on the morrow's home-ward journey. The spoils of two fishers are in that box on the rack overhead. Before those fish are cooked, a friend, a true "Northener angler" will see them, as we say, "See, those are grayling ! "

KILLING FISH.

THE best anglers are humane, gentle anglers.

Their sport is lawful and enjoyable, but it sacrifices life. It is plain that the life should be ended with as little suffering as possible. So good fishermen usually give their captures a knock on the head as soon as they are out of the water. An eel should be cut through the bone just behind the head. Perch and pike are very tenacious of life, and need a heavy blow to put them to death. It will lessen the sum total of pain in the world if every one who reads this will resolve to kill his fish soon as caught. The following from a Canadian paper is worth considering :

—“ Talking with a gentleman of eighty-four years, a few days ago—a man of great experience in practical life, and withal one of humane instincts and principles we gathered many interesting suggestions and ideas, that would be worth repeating. Among other things, he referred to a life-long practice he had always observed. In catching fish, he never failed to kill them immediately upon drawing them out of the water, which is their natural element. Every boy knows this fact, yet hardly one in a hundred stops to think that a living fish, deprived of the peculiar means of respiration that the water furnishes, must suffer similarly to a human being cut off from its usual supply of atmospheric air. Death by suffocation is

regarded as terrible, and a fish out of water, being deprived of the oxygen that sustains its blood, doubtless suffers intensely. It is the easiest thing to kill a fish, either by striking it a slight blow upon the head, or by cutting its throat. It is well known that the flesh of animals wounded and left to die is unfit for food, and experienced fishermen say that a fish should be killed immediately on being caught, in order to render it fit for the table. But aside from the question of food, the subject should be considered as one of principle. We know by the fierce struggles of the captive fish it is in severe pain, and humanity dictates that it should be speedily put out of misery. We have no need to inflict needless suffering upon any creature, and the torture of a fish is quite as bad as the torture of a dog or a horse."

We may add to this that the pain fish feel must be less than that of horses and dogs. They are made to be eaten ; and they soon die.

THE END

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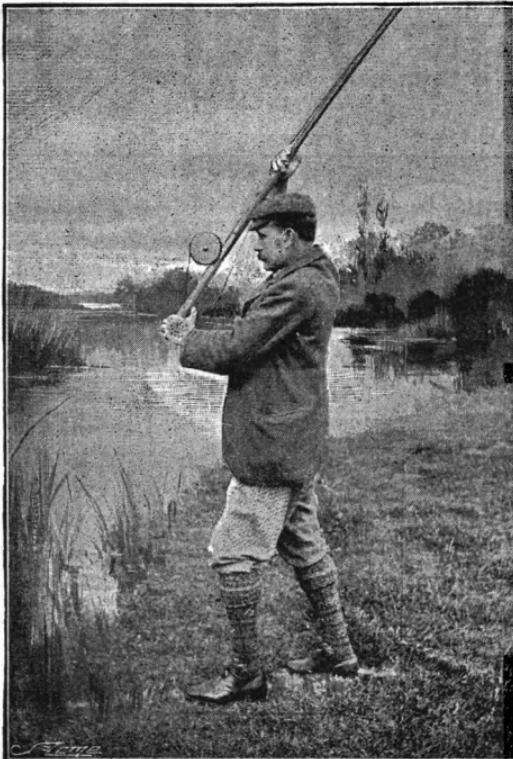
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